The COMMUNIST

FEBRUARY

CONGRESS OF COMMUNIST PARTY OF FRANCE

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

Review of the Month	A. B.
The Steel Workers in Convention	B. K. GEBERT
The Storm Center of the Cuban Crisis	BLAS ROCO
Building the People's Front in Harlem	JAMES W. FORD and GEORGE E. BLAKE
Farmers Advance in the Movement for the People's Front	JERRY COLEMAN

ENGELS ON THE ANARCHISTS IN SPAIN

TWENTY CENTS

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A MAJOR POLITICAL EVENT!

THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

By EARL BROWDER

The position of the Communist Party on current events and issues:

C.I.O.
Supreme Court
Unemployment Insurance
Young America
Liberty League
Fascism
Farmer-Labor Party
China
Spain
Religion

A. F. of L.
Wall Street
Industrial unionism
Negro rights
Roosevelt administration
Trotskyism
People's Front in France
Mexico
Soviet Union
Defense of Culture

—and the relation of our historical past to present-day problems:

American Revolution
Jefferson vs. Federalists

U. S. Constitution
Lincoln and the Communists

Large format, 354 pages, handsomely bound, with a new portrait of the author. $2.25

Ready February 21

NOTE: By arrangement with the Marxist Book-of-the-Month service, advance copies of this book will be available to members of the Communist Party on February 1.

Coming soon—

THE UNITED FRONT AGAINST FASCISM

a new book by G. DIMITROFF

•

Order from your local bookshop or from

WORKERS LIBRARY PUBLISHERS

P. O. Box 148, Sta. D New York City

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

VOL. XVII, No. 2. FEBRUARY, 1938

The COMMUNIST

A MAGAZINE OF THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MARXISM-LENINISM
PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE U.S.A.
EDITORS: EARL BROWDER, ALEX BITTELMAN, V. J. JEROME

CONTENTS

Review of the Month	A. B.	99
The Congress of the Communist Party of France	WILLIAM Z. FOSTER	113
The Steel Workers in Convention	B. K. GEBERT	122
The Storm Center of the Cuban Crisis	BLAS ROCA	134
The Bakuninists at Work	FREDERICK ENGELS	143
Building the People's Front in Harlem	JAMES W. FORD *and* GEORGE E. BLAKE	158
Farmers Advance in the Movement for the People's Front	JERRY COLEMAN	169
The Health Status of American Workers	HARRIET SILVERMAN	177
Book Reviews	JAMES W. FORD *and* A. W. BERRY	188

Entered as second class matter November 2, 1927, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Send checks, money orders and correspondence to THE COMMUNIST, *P. O. Box 148, Sta. D (50 E. 13th St.), New York. Subscription rates: $2.00 a year; $1.00 for six months; foreign and Canada $2.50 a year. Single copies 20 cents.*

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Recent Books and Pamphlets on

THE UNITED STATES and the SOVIET UNION

THE UNITED STATES

The People's Front, by Earl Browder $2.25

The Civil War in the United States, by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels 2.50

Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy, by James S. Allen . 1.25

Collective Security: The Road to Peace, by Clarence Hathaway .01

The People's Message to Congress, by A. B. Magil 03

The Campus—Fortress of Democracy, by Joseph P. Lash . . .05

The High Cost of Living: How to Bring It Down, by Margaret Cowl .01

Arsenal of Facts, compiled by the Labor Research Association .25

THE SOVIET UNION

History of the Russian Revolution, Edited by Gorky, Molotov, Stalin, etc. 1.25

The Russian Revolution, by V. I. Lenin and Joseph Stalin . . 2.00

Sixty Letters, by Foreign Workers in U.S.S.R. 25

Regulations Governing Elections to the Supreme Soviet of U.S.S.R. .05

North America and the Soviet Union, by Earl Browder . . .03

•

Order from your local bookshop or from

WORKERS LIBRARY PUBLISHERS

P. O. Box 148, Sta. D New York City

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

REVIEW OF THE MONTH

Wanted: An Adequate Relief Program Democratically Administered. The Fight Against Layoffs and for Greater Mass Purchasing Power. Minimum Wages and Maximum Hours. Monopoly Price Policies and Practices. Reaction Banks on Congress. President Roosevelt Makes Another Cryptic Remark. Class Consciousness of Masses and the Ganging Up of the Monopolies. C.I.O. Carries On. Monopolies Must Be Fought Specifically and Practically. Fight "In General" Means No Fight. Contradictions of Capitalism and of the New Deal. Illusions of Ludlow Amendment. More Power to People's Control Over Foreign Policy. Organize Masses for Peace and Collective Security. Armaments Are No Substitute for Collective Security. Frey and Hutcheson Maneuver Against Trade Union Unity. Vacillations of Weak Elements. Unity Must Be Fought For. Hope Alone Will Not Do. C.I.O. Leadership for Unity Will Bring Results. Greetings to National Party Builders Congress.

AN ADEQUATE relief program for the unemployed workers and needy farmers—this is the first and most urgent obligation of the government. This follows, of course, from the President's message to Congress. It follows from the ringing promise: "I do not propose to let the people down." But we wish to emphasize that the relief program must be *adequate,* that sufficient funds must be appropriated to take care of the tremendous needs which are increasing daily, and that the administration of the relief program must be *democratized, i. e.,* the unemployed workers and needy farmers must be given an opportunity to participate actively in the relief administration.

The fight is for *an adequate relief program democratically administered.* From this point of view, the budgetary proposals of the President for the fiscal year 1938-39 are very far from satisfactory. With the Woodrum amendment still in force, the proposed appropriation of one billion dollars would allow of no more than one-twelfth of this amount to be spent each month. This being the case, there is little comfort in the President's promise to ask for additional appropriations if things get worse. For the fact of the matter is that things are plenty bad already.

Somewhere around four million workers have lost their jobs since September 1, which means that total unemployment by the beginning of February was about 13,000,000, with nearly 4,000,000 partly employed. It is clear therefore that the present appropriation for the W.P.A., straitjacketed as it is by the Woodrum amendment, cannot take care of the growing army of unemployed. What is necessary is the immediate repeal of the Woodrum amendment and the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

adoption of the Schwellenbach-Allen resolution on W.P.A. employment, which is now before the Senate. This is the demand of the C.I.O., of the Workers Alliance, of the progressive forces among the farmers and in the A. F. of L. To carry the W.P.A. to July, most conservative estimates require a deficiency appropriation of no less than $300,000,000.

It must be remembered that only a small proportion of the unemployed are qualified today for insurance payments, according to the Security Law, and that only in twenty-one states did insurance become payable in January. Moreover, in many, if not most, cases insurance payments are much below the W.P.A. wages. It has been roughly estimated that no less than 8,000,000 unemployed workers are today receiving neither work relief nor unemployment insurance. If we add to this the growing number of needy farmers, who prefer job relief on the W.P.A. instead of the Resettlement Administration, it becomes fully evident that the first thing for Congress to do is to repeal the Woodrum amendment and to adopt the Schwellenbach-Allen resolution.

We say the first, not the only thing. A way must be found to compel the monopolies to stop lay-offs and to begin large-scale re-employment or else they must be made to pay *adequately* to provide jobs and relief under the government's program.

You remember the big argument of the monopolies against the tax on corporation surpluses last year. The cry went up that, if only the government would allow the monopolies to accumulate surpluses, they would be able to maintain their payrolls even in times of slack, they would continue to give employment to their workers even in business recessions. That was exactly what they said then. But what is happening now? On September 30, 1937, General Motors had a surplus of $419,000,000; yet shortly afterwards they threw out of employment 30,000 workers. Mr. Henderson, a government economist, testifying before the Byrnes senatorial committee, cited this outrageous fact to show the sabotage and hypocrisy of the monopolists.

But what is the answer to that? *Make them carry on or else make them pay fully for a rounded-out and adequate relief program.* This is the immediate task of the government and of the present session of Congress.

On this program, next to adequate appropriations for and democratic administration of the W.P.A., comes the amendment of the Security Law, the broadening of its application to all workers and toilers, the speeding up of its coming into force throughout the country, and the raising of payments to its beneficiaries. This—not as a substitute for an adequate W.P.A., as Senator Byrnes might be figuring, but *in addition to it.* Arthur J. Altmeyer, chairman of the Social Security Board, explained to the Byrnes committee (as reported by *The New York Times,* Jan. 5) "that before the year was out probably $225,000,000 would have been paid out in unemployment compensation benefits, under the present terms of the law, *and that there was now about $607,000,000 to the credit of the states in the insurance fund.*"

Next comes the adoption of a minimum wage and maximum hour bill—a minimum hourly wage of 40 cents

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and a maximum work week of 40 hours would be the most desirable under the circumstances. The endorsement of the "principle" of such a bill by the six Southern governors, following a certain understanding with the President, probably means that the opposition of the Southern reactionaries in Congress to hours and wages legislation will be withdrawn. But the fight still remains over the *nature* of such a bill. Hence it is the duty of labor and all progressive forces to come together and exert their combined influence towards the end that this session of Congress adopt the right kind of bill, one that will really benefit *all of the overworked and underpaid,* that will establish *by law* a genuine minimum of wages and maximum of hours.

Next comes anti-monopoly legislation to combat the low prices paid by the monopolies to the farmer for his produce and the high prices charged by the monopolies to the farmers and workers and middle classes for the products of industry as well as agriculture. This is a central point of struggle at the present time. Monopolistic price policies and practices, which rob the people all the time and from all ends, become especially painful for the masses in time of industrial recession and economic crisis. It is therefore necessary at this time, when the capitalist system and monopoly sabotage are leading the country into a new economic crisis, to direct the struggle of the people against the monopolistic price policies and practices. The agreement recently reached between the Farmers' Union, Labor's Non-Partisan League and the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers' Union—this agreement has as one of its central points the struggle against monopoly price policies.

All the measures discussed in the foregoing should be viewed as basic parts of a rounded-out program of relief to the people for which the monopolies must be made to pay. These measures must be adopted by the present session of Congress *if the people are not to be let down.* But not alone these measures. In accord with the program of action of the Communist Party, a program of demands which is called for by widest circles of labor, farmers, middle classes and Negroes, Congress at the present session must adopt measures for refinancing the mortgages of small farmers and home-owners, introduce the principle of *cost of production* into the pending farm-price legislation, initiate *effective* aid to tenant farmers and sharecroppers, broaden out the Housing Law in accord with the prosopals of Phillip Murray, chairman of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, revise fundamentally the present taxation structure on the principle of make the rich pay, pass the anti-lynching bill, strengthen the powers and democratize the Federal Reserve Board System to combat the economic and financial sabotage of the monopolies, revise the "Neutrality Act" along the lines of collective security by adopting the O'Connell resolution.

But this program of the people has to be backed and fought for by the masses themselves, by their organized and combined strength. Congress and especially the reactionaries in Congress must be made to feel the pres-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sure of that strength every day. This will encourage the progressives in Congress to combine their forces and to assert more effectively their position. The situation is more than ripe for the organization of a broad and effective progressive bloc in Congress to push through the demands of the people *for adequate relief to the unemployed workers and needy farmers and for curbing the monopolies and breaking their sabotage.*

Let it not be forgotten that reaction is still counting heavily on Congress to defeat the will of the people, to emasculate the modest program even of President Roosevelt. Read the *New York Herald Tribune:*

"It is, therefore, to the members of the House and Senate that the voters can look with hope today. Let Congress make it unmistakably clear that the American system is to be preserved. . . . A Congress that knows its own mind has nothing to fear from a confused and wavering President. Neither has the country, so far as the essentials of its faith and future are concerned." (Jan. 5.)

And remember also that the reactionary "hopes" on Congress rest not alone on the Vandenberg Republicans but also (and perhaps largely) on the reactionary Democrats. The incipient coalition is not dead; it is merely hiding from the public gaze. It is clear, therefore, that only an energetic and broad progressive bloc in Congress can give the people's program a chance. When the elections of 1938 will come around, the voters will have the right to ask of the candidates, not only "how did you vote on the people's program?" but also "what did you do to help organize the progressive forces in Congress *to fight* for our demands?"

In his Jackson Day address, the President had something very significant to say on the reactionaries in his own party. He said:

"As we move forward under our present momentum, it is not only necessary but it is right that the party slough off any remains of sectionalism and class consciousness. Party progress cannot stop just because some public officials and private groups fail to move with the times. Their places will be amply filled by the rising generation."

We feel there is something significant in that, but what exactly does it signify? That is, for the moment, not easy to tell. His shot at "sectionalism" would surely indicate serving notice on the reactionaries. And that is all to the good, although this alone will not do the trick. His shot, however, at "class consciousness" is more ambiguous and sounds to us very much like "the plague on both your houses." And that is not so good. If the President meant to place the demands of labor and of the toiling farmers in the same category of class consciousness as the demands of the reactionary monopolies and equally to fire away at both of them, if that is what he meant, then it is positively no good. Aside from the basic fact that the class consciousness of labor and toiling farmers spells *progress,* while that of the reactionary monopolies spells *reaction and fascism,* aside from this fundamental fact which determines the eventual victory of the camp of progress, there is also the other fact that the workers, toiling farmers, Negroes, and progressive middle classes make up the *overwhelming majority of our people,* and if you should slough them off (if it could be done), what is there that

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

remains? To slough off *their* class consciousness means precisely to slough off the "rising generation." Surely, the President couldn't mean that, or could he? Not if he means to fight for his own program and win.

We find the same ambiguous note also in some parts of the President's message to Congress. For example, where he said:

> "In the case of labor, *as in the case of capital,* misrepresentation of the policy of the government of the United States is deception which will not long deceive. In both cases we seek cooperation. In every case power and responsibility must go hand in hand." (Our emphasis—*A. B.*)

Now, we should not like to rush to conclusions as to the full meaning of this paragraph, yet a couple of questions have to be asked. Is it correct, does it square with the facts, and does it help the fight against the monopolists, to treat the demands of labor the same way "as in the case of capital"? Obviously not. It would be like treating the victim of a hold-up the same as the bandit. And let it be said in passing that the Roosevelt administration has as yet done very little to protect *effectively* the victim from the bandit. Three to four million new unemployed since September 1 would be proof enough for the moment.

And another question: If the President had in mind Matthew Woll and Hutcheson as those who misrepresent the government's labor policies? And he must have had them in mind because these are the "labor" people who misrepresent the Labor Relations Act and demand its amendment in accord with the dictates of the National Association of Manufacturers. Now, then, if he meant Woll and Co. (and he could mean no one else and remain true to fact), why didn't he say so instead of talking ambiguously of the "case of labor"? And demanding "equal" responsibility from capital *and labor?* From the message:

> "The ownership of vast properties or the organization of thousands of workers creates a heavy obligation of public service. The power should not be sought or sanctioned unless the responsibility is accepted as well."

Now, the ownership of vast properties by the monopolies is the source of exploitation, crises, reaction. That is one thing. The organization of thousands of workers into unions creates a power *against* the exploitation and robbery of the monopolies—a power *for the people* as a whole against reaction and fascism and war. It is one of labor's *class contributions* (not the only one) to the democracy, progress and prosperity of the American people. In the last analysis—the most dependable and lasting contribution. A consistent bourgeois democrat should recognize this fact. How then can one demand in one breath responsibility from "both" labor and the monopolies?

The President would do well to remember that when you give reaction a finger, it will get your whole hand. Almost on the morrow after the President delivered his message, the *Herald Tribune* rushed to print with an editorial entitled "The President Warns Labor," enjoying the "refreshing modification of the attitude hitherto accredited to him" and urging the reactionaries in Congress "to press for amendment of the Wagner act" (Jan. 6).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bourgeois democrats, even genuine ones, still have to learn. And they will learn the better, the stronger and more united labor becomes as a class, economically and politically, the more consciously labor collaborates with its immediate allies (toiling farmers, middle classes and Negroes) and with all progressive forces, the more systematically labor as a class champions everything that promotes the democracy, progress, peace and prosperity of the American people. This is the way of labor unity and of the People's Front.

The C.I.O., the progressive forces of the A. F. of L. and Labor's Non-Partisan League can proceed confidently on this road. In part it was summarized in the leading editorial of the *C.I.O. News* as follows:

"In 1938 the C.I.O. has no intention of resting on its oars. Rather it looks forward to twelve months busily occupied with continuing its organization campaign to reach new millions of unprotected workers. It intends to consolidate gains already made. It intends to protect the unemployed from the pauperization programs of budget-balancing, relief-cutting Tories. It will war relentlessly on those who hope to use the current business decline to undermine the gains made by America's progressive forces in the last year.

"It will hit—and hit hard—during the 1938 elections those representatives of the people who have openly fought labor and those who have betrayed the promises once made to labor voters.

"It will press for constructive legislation, both state and federal, to keep children out of factories, to bar the sweatshop from industry, to provide decent housing for the people, to make these United States a better place in which to live.

"In 1938, the Committee for Industrial Organization will continue to be the great champion of those Americans who desire peace, true democracy, economic and political freedom." (Dec. 29.)

* * *

IN HIS message to Congress, the President enumerated a number of monopolistic practices "which most people believe should be ended." What are they?

"They include tax avoidance through corporate and other methods . . . excessive capitalization, investment write-ups and security manipulations, price rigging and collusive bidding. . . . They include high pressure salesmanship, the use of patent laws to enable larger corporations to maintain high prices and withhold from the public the advantages of the progress of science, unfair competition which drives the smaller producer out of business, intimidation of local or state governments to prevent the enactment of laws for the protection of labor by threatening to move elsewhere, the shifting of actual production from one locality or region to another in pursuit of the cheapest wage scale."

This list is, of course, far from being complete. And the President was quite mindful of that because he immediately proceeded to raise the more general question of "concentration of economic control . . . control of other people's money, the people's labor, other people's lives." Yet it was necessary and possible to list several other *specific* monopoly practices, as well as to give greater emphasis to some of the practices which he did mention. For example: the specific anti-labor and anti-democratic practices of the monopolies which were placed on record by the investigations of the LaFollette committee such as labor spying, promotion of vigilantism, anti-union conspiracies, corruption of local government, the whole "system" of strike-breaking, evasion

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and violation of the civil rights and liberties of the people, etc., etc. This is no small matter. As a result of the LaFollette investigations, the people expect legislation that will effectively combat these practices of the monopolies, and no program is complete which does not attack these specific abuses of capitalist reaction.

Greater emphasis should have been placed by the President on what he described as "price rigging and collusive bidding." What we are dealing with here are the price policies and practices of the monopolies. We have in mind especially the practice of imposing low prices upon the farmer for his produce, extracting high prices from him for the products of industry, and the relatively rigid maintenance of high prices upon all products of monopoly industry in the face of a general fall of prices, wages, farm income, etc. We speak here, in other words, of that particular feature of monopoly capitalism which enables the trusts to deflate everybody else and to grow richer and more powerful in the process; a feature of monopoly capitalism which causes particular suffering to the masses in times of business decline and crisis.

It is worthwhile recalling that this relative rigidity of monopoly prices was one of the reasons for the protracted character of the economic crisis of 1929-32. Discussing the reasons for "the unprecedentedly protracted character of that crisis," Comrade Stalin listed as one of the reasons the following:

"Fourthly, it is to be explained by the fact that the monopolist cartels which dominate industry strive to maintain the high prices of goods, and this circumstance makes the crisis particularly painful and hinders the absorption of the stocks of commodities." (Report to Seventeenth Congress of C.P.S.U., 1934.)

Of course, monopolistic price policies by themselves do not make an economic crisis. It is made, inevitably and periodically, by the fundamental contradictions of the capitalist system, notably the exploitation of the masses and the anarchy of production. But the monopolies are the greatest exploiters of the people and they are the biggest single factor in intensifying the anarchy of capitalist production, in fact, *the greatest intensifiers of all capitalist contradictions.* And monopolistic price policies and practices are an important element of monopoly capitalism. These practices have, no doubt, helped to touch off the business decline, have aggravated its course so far, and are pushing the country into a new economic crisis. Therefore, to attack these practices, to attack them *in a specific and practical way,* is one of the effective means of protecting the people from a new economic catastrophe and of making the monopolies pay for their abuses and sabotage.

Mr. Jackson, in his debate with Mr. Wilkie, pointed to the following fact which bears on the question:

"Steel has declined in production from near 90 per cent of capacity to near 30 per cent without dropping the price of a cent."

And we should add: *while at the same time discharging tens of thousands of workers.*

Continuing, Mr. Jackson said:

"Steel is not alone in this policy. Important basic industries—notably those supplying building materials—have followed the same

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

policy and have simply priced us out of a housing program."

Again we say: attack these practices *specifically and practically.*

Walter Lippmann pretends to be having a good time as he engages in ridiculing the contradictions in the anti-monopoly policies of the New Deal. Discoursing on the topic "Mr. Roosevelt Versus Messrs. Jackson and Ickes" (*Herald Tribune*, Jan. 6), Lippmann thinks he has found something very funny about the New Deal when he points to the fact that, whereas Jackson and Ickes seem to be driving towards another trust-busting campaign and for "free competition," the President pushes towards more monopoly and less free competition only under government regulation. Well, Mr. Lippmann may not know it, but what he is really ridiculing is capitalism and not the New Deal. And to know this is important both theoretically and practically.

There are, no doubt, numerous contradictions in the policies of the New Deal, so many indeed that we couldn't undertake here even a bare enumeration. But where do they all spring from? Largely from the fact that the New Deal seeks to correct the grosser abuses of the monopolies *with the intent of strengthening capitalism.* Here is the main source of all the contradictions and difficulties of the New Deal. To seek to strengthen capitalism by attacking the most outrageous abuses and excesses of its most decisive element—the monopolies—and to try to do it in the present epoch of the general crisis of capitalism as a system—this is *a contradictory task.* Naturally, the specific policies proposed for the realization of such a task will be contradictory. Hence, he who ridicules (like Lippmann) the contradictions of these New Deal policies is ridiculing capitalism, its insoluble contradictions.

But this is, of course, not what Lippmann intended. What he really wants is that the government leave the monopolies alone and let them do as they please. This would be bad enough. But what would it mean in the perspective? It would mean letting the monopolies realize *their* policies, *their* strategy. And what is that? To make the people pay for all the contradictions of capitalism, to make the masses carry all the burdens of crisis. And since this cannot be accomplished without curbing the people, without destroying their civil rights and liberties, the political policies of the monopolies are reaction and fascism. The Hoover regime of 1929-32 has given the American people an inkling of how the policies of the monopolies work out in practice. Therefore the people do not want to return to that regime. And this is probably what galls Walter Lippmann.

As to the New Deal, it certainly has the merit that it rejects the reactionary and fascist path of the monopolies, that it sticks to bourgeois democracy and seeks through all its contradictions to eliminate some of the most outrageous abuses in the practices of the monopolies. This at the present time is working for progress. The working class and its allies are vitally interested in supporting and promoting such progressive development. The working class and its allies are interested in seeing to it that the struggle against the monopo-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lies is carried on, not in "general," but against *specific* expressions of monopoly exploitation and sabotage (as discussed in the foregoing) and by means of *practical* measures of legislative action and mass struggle that will really curb the monopolies and tend to break their economic and political sabotage. This will help the people at once and will strengthen them, and the People's Front movement, for undertaking such measures as will actually *undermine* the power of the monopolies and thus open the way of transition to the socialist liberation.

* * *

THE decision of the House, by a vote of 209 to 198, refusing to take the Ludlow amendment out of committee, has killed the proposal for the moment. Nevertheless, this proposal of Ludlow has already managed to introduce a good deal of confusion in the minds of many who genuinely and sincerely wish for peace. It is in part the remnant of the old confusion on isolationism and neutrality. Illusions die hard and clever reactionaries know how to exploit this fact. It is safe, therefore, to assume that of this Ludlow proposal or something similar we have not yet heard the last.

The thing that undoubtedly misleads some people into believing that the Ludlow proposal is good is its *democratic appearance:* it looks so very much democratic. For doesn't it refer to the people directly the most vital question of war and peace? The honest answer to the question is: *it does not.* It merely gives the people *a new illusion,* and behind this illusion a war-bent government could drag this country into war even more surely than otherwise.

Why not learn from experience, from living facts? What good would a Ludlow amendment have done the Japanese people if they had it in their constitution? The Japanese military-fascist clique has been waging war on China for years, but war has not yet been declared, and thus the "constitutional" question of who shall declare it has not yet arisen. And so the Japanese people would still not be entitled to pass on the question, even though they had a Ludlow amendment.

What good would such an amendment have done the Italian and German peoples in preventing or stopping the war of their governments against the Spanish Republic? No good at all. Because "constitutionally" the question has not yet arisen there either. War has not been declared, yet war is being waged.

Imperialist governments bent on war have so many powers of manipulating *foreign affairs* that they can place their peoples in the midst of war before the latter have a chance to catch their breath. They wage war without declaring it as the fascist powers are doing today. And so a Ludlow amendment could sleep peacefully in the statutes of the Constitution, with the people enjoying the constitutional right of declaring war, while these same people would be actually waging war under the command of the government.

In the face of these facts, which no one can or should overlook, how can it be seriously maintained that the Ludlow proposal would actually place in the hands of the people *the decision* on whether there should be war or peace? It would do no such thing.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The government could easily see to it that the need for such a decision should never arise, simply by waging war without declaring it.

This is so evident that very few people would deny it. But, the question is raised, supposing the amendment will not do much good in preventing war, what harm could it do? It surely would tend to discourage the government from pursuing a war-like course? The answer to which is: it will do positive harm and is more likely to encourage the government in such a course rather than discourage. This may not be so evident at first glance, but it is true none the less.

We must begin at the beginning. And the beginning is the course of the government, *its foreign policies.* If you want to discourage the government from pursuing a war-like course, if you want the government to pursue the course of peace, you must not wait till war is actually at your door but you must at once arouse the people *and give it the power to influence the government's foreign policies in the direction of peace.* Because in the daily making of the foreign policy by the government—war is made or peace. But the Ludlow proposal—does it give the people any power to influence foreign policy? None whatever. It leaves the thing entirely in the hands of the government. And furthermore: it takes the minds of the people *away* from foreign policy—the place where war and peace are made—and thus would give a war-bent government *additional leeway* in preparing war, in making war inevitable. And this is both *anti*-democratic and *anti*-peace.

As against the anti-democratic and anti-peace proposal of Ludlow, we must *fight for greater democratic control by the people over the government's foreign policies.* Admittedly, that is not easy to establish under a capitalist form of government, but many things can be done. And the main thing: a powerful and genuine people's peace movement, well organized, and fighting consistently to make the government follow a policy of collective security, this is the most immediate and practical way to organize the people's democratic power for control over foreign policy and hence for the maintenance of peace.

It is very instructive to analyze the position of the reactionaries and warmongers on this question. Many of them are in favor of the Ludlow amendment because it is in accord with so-called "isolation" which would lead this country and the people inevitably and *blindly* into war. Some other reactionaries are "opposed" to this amendment; but it is precisely from the reactionary opponents of the Ludlow proposal that we get the deepest insight into its true meaning. This group of reactionaries (for example, the *Herald Tribune*) wants neither Congress nor the people directly to legislate on any questions dealing with war, peace and foreign policy. Behind this position is a firm belief in the inevitability of a new world war and just as firm a determination that this country participate in it. The monopolies for whom these reactionaries speak want the field to be clear for them to drag this country into the war on the side of those who will promise most for the imperialist aggrandizement of these monopolies, very likely, on the side of the fascist

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

powers. These reactionaries found it therefore quite difficult to make up their minds on what to do about the Ludlow amendment. They knew that, if adopted, it would in no way interfere with their imperialist and warlike policies. Yet they seem to have felt that this whole business might establish some "dangerous" precedents of the Congress and the people legislating on war, peace and foreign affairs. This they did not like. And so they finally inclined to killing the thing largely *to prevent even discussion* among the people on these vital matters.

A few quotations from a *Herald Tribune* editorial will show that this is so. Writing before the vote was taken on the possibility that the Ludlow proposal might be killed, it says:

"... it will be a good thing, but only partly repair the evil inherent in all such attempts as this to *influence an immediate and practical international issue* under the guise of legislating against remote and abstract contingencies." (Jan. 10.)

You see where they are shooting at? At an attempt by the Congress to influence foreign policy. And further:

"But even if it is killed today, it will still do harm enough unless it is at the same time made clear . . . that the vote, however it goes, is in no sense a mandate of any sort *concerning the actual course of our present foreign relations.*" (*Ibid.* Our emphasis—*A.B.*)

In other words, do what you like with the Ludlow proposal but do not try to influence the foreign policy of this country. Isn't that clear? Absolutely. The reactionaries and warmongers are not worried about the Ludlow amendment. But they are worried about the people stepping forth to influence "the actual course of our present foreign relations." That's why we say again and in opposition to the reactionaries: *Organize and mobilize the people into a peace movement, based upon collective security, supporting the President's Chicago peace declaration, checking up and controlling the government's foreign policies day by day, to influence the actual course of our present foreign relations.* As part of this work, the peace movement should consider the organization of a *People's Peace Referendum.* And as part of the same struggle for peace, the people should prepare for the 1938 Congressional elections to elect such representatives as will fight for peace and collective security, as can be depended upon to put into effect this true policy of peace.

Fight for a foreign policy based upon collective security—this is today the way of giving effect to the democratic power of the people over the question of war or peace. The O'Connell resolution now before Congress goes in that direction.

From the same angle must be approached the question of increased armaments and national defense. In the President's proposals for increased armaments—the tremendous appropriation of $1,200,000,000 – there are many points to be considered; but one point is of a fundamental character. We are facing the real danger that rearmament will be pushed forward *as a substitute* for a struggle for collective security and—by some—even in opposition to it. And that would be disaster.

We cannot forget the criminal trick played by the British Tories upon the British people in a similar situa-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion. Posing as friends of collective security while betraying it daily in fact, the British Tories kept on complaining to the people that British arms were not sufficient to enforce the peace policies of the government. They said: give us more arms and we will have a stronger collective security. But what happened? As the Tory government got stronger, its collective security attachments grew weaker until now one can hardly notice any attachment at all.

Of course, our situation is not the same. For one thing, President Roosevelt is not a British Tory. But he is not in control of Congress: he will no doubt get Congressional OK on armaments, but how much OK will he get today for his Chicago peace declaration? It is therefore clear that there is grave danger that the rearmament business will be carried through in the good old way—as a jingoist-imperialist program of war preparation, with the issue of peace and collective security disappearing from the scene. That is why we must say: *Foreign policy and collective security come first.* This is the way to peace and national defense. The question of armaments must be subordinated and made to depend upon the needs and requirements of peace and collective security.

* * *

MATTHEW WOLL, we believe, has made it amply clear that, in accepting the C.I.O. proposal for unity negotiations, he and Frey and Hutcheson (not to mention Green) were governed not by a desire for unity but by a desire to maneuver against unity, to divide and split the C.I.O. At the time, we pointed out this possibility in these columns. Nevertheless, we insisted that the desire for unity among the membership and progressive forces in the A. F. of L. is growing to such strength that the splitting maneuvers of the reactionaries in the Executive Council will eventually be defeated, although this might take time.

There is no doubt that:

> "Stripped of the embellishments calculated for the consumption of the innocents, the A. F. of L. strategy was not to meet halfway the C.I.O. proposals to bring about unity of all organized labor, but a new mask for the old intention to divide the C.I.O." (*The Advance,* organ of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.)

Not to see that this was so, one must be blind indeed. To assume that it was not so is not only doing violence to fact but is playing directly or indirectly into the hands of those reactionary forces which are working against unity.

The task therefore is *to expose* these maneuvers of the reactionaries and to make the will of the A. F. of L. membership for unity *more effective.*

It would be a bad mistake to assume that just because Frey, Hutcheson & Co. were successful in preventing the consummation of unity at this stage, therefore the chances for unity have become less favorable. Nor would it be correct to assume that nothing much can be done now to promote further the making of unity; that somehow, somewhere, at some point unity will come about without the champions of unity working for it *now,* consciously, planfully and in a practical way.

No. Unity has to be worked for and fought for. Unity has to be made.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The emergence of the C.I.O., its growing strength and influence, are one of the most powerful forces for trade union and labor unity in this country. It was the C.I.O., at its Atlantic City Conference last October, that took the initiative and lead in the making of unity. *This lead and initiative the C.I.O. must retain under all circumstances.*

It has been true right along, and continues to be true, that not everyone who cries for "unity" really means it; in fact, the reactionaries in the Executive Council cry "unity" all right, but what they really mean is division and split. But it is equally true that he who is genuinely for unity, but does not consciously and planfully work *to make it* is not doing all that is necessary to bring about such unity.

We are arguing here against certain ideas creeping into the camp of the genuine champions of unity—whether among the A. F. of L. membership or in the C.I.O.—that the time is not ripe for unity, that all we can do *now* is merely "hope" for it, that there is little that can be done now to overcome the opposition of the reactionary splitters. We are arguing here against the psychology of "deadlock" setting in. That will not be good, not for unity.

Why do we say that? Because the time and need for unity are more than ripe, although it has to take time to bring it to full consummation. The membership and progressive forces in the A. F. of L. want unity. They have given numerous demonstrations of their belief that the unity proposals of the C.I.O. are reasonable and practical. And this is fundamental in the situation. There is no doubt that the worsening economic situation, the growing political reaction and the menacing threat of a new world war—all these factors have strengthened the will of the A. F. of L. membership for unity the same as they have guided the initiative for unity by the C.I.O. But there is still something missing. And what is that? It is that the will of the A. F. of L. membership for unity has not yet been made *sufficiently effective,* sufficiently, that is, to overcome the opposition to unity by Frey, Hutcheson & Co. This evidently still requires time, but time for active unity work, *time in which the unity initiative and leadership of the C.I.O. will be needed more than ever before.*

We say all of this also for another reason. The reactionaries, unable to learn anything good, do seem to have learned to play demagogically and deceitfully with the slogan of unity—a slogan which is so dear to the hearts of all workers—C.I.O. and A. F. of L. The more mature workers can and do see through this demagogic game of the reactionary splitters. But the less mature, and some of the weaker elements even in the camp of the genuine champions of unity, tend to become confused, disoriented and wobbly. Surely, that is not good for unity. And how can that be helped? By continuing and extending the initiative and leadership of the C.I.O. in the struggle for unity, *now and every day* until unity is finally consummated.

To give practical and immediate effect to this policy, several steps suggest themselves. One is a direct appeal to the membership of both A. F. of L. and C.I.O. The negotiating commit-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tees had before them two proposals, one presented by the C.I.O. representatives and the other—by the representatives of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. Let the Executive Council agree to submit both of these proposals to the membership of the A. F. of L. And if it agrees, the C.I.O. can submit these proposals to its membership. And let the rank and file speak.

Another step that suggests itself is the proposal for a unity convention of both organizations, democratically elected by the rank and file on the basis of proportional representation.

And while these two steps are being realized, an understanding should be reached for the maximum possible *unity of action* between the unions of both organizations. Such unity of action has been taking place right along in many localities and with the most fruitful and beneficial results for the workers of both organizations as well as for the unorganized. Such unity of action on the economic and political fields, as much as can be agreed on in the fight against lay-offs, for adequate relief, for civil rights, for peace, should be extended and carried on everywhere. This will not only meet to an extent the immediate burning needs of the workers, but will surely pave the way for complete trade union unity.

Let us continue and intensify the struggle for unity. Let us work more energetically than heretofore to make the will of the A. F. of L. membership for unity more effective. Let us build and strengthen the C.I.O., propagating widely and winning supporters among the masses for its principles and policies.

* * *

GREETINGS to the *National Party Builders Delegates Congress* which will be held in New York City on February 18-21. Together with the Central Committee, this Congress will review the course and achievements of our national membership recruiting campaign and will lay the basis for systematic and daily Party building.

In initiating the campaign, we sought to recruit 25,000 new members by January 21 and to raise the dues payments to 50,000 per month, thus giving ourselves a broader base for further and systematic recruiting, acquiring in the campaign experience, habits and momentum for all-around Party building in our daily mass activities—membership, organizations and press.

This Congress will be a great occasion for registering achievements, evaluating experiences, mapping the further course of Party building and for the training and bringing forward of new active forces in the Party.

Greetings and best wishes, comrades, for a successful and fruitful congress.

A. B.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF FRANCE

BY WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

THE Communist Party of France held its Ninth Congress in Arles on December 25-29. The holding of the Congress assumed the aspect of a first class political event. All the capitalist papers devoted extensive space to it and followed its debates closely. Characteristically enough, the journal which gave the least attention to the Congress, so far as I could see, was the official organ of the Socialist Party, *Le Populaire*. The big publicity around the Congress shows a general realization of the great and growing role of the Communist Party in the political life of the French people.

Present at the Congress were some 1,300 delegates, representing 341,000 Party members in France and its colonies. This big body of Communists, together with the youth organizations, comprise well onto half a million members. Maurice Thorez, General Secretary of the Party, was thus able to characterize the Communist Party as the largest party in France. There were also present a considerable number of delegates from various other Communist Parties—German, Spanish, Italian, Czechoslovakian, Chinese, Philippine, English, Canadian, American, and others. The delegate from the Canadian Party was Tim Buck, and those representing the Communist Party of the U.S.A. were Earl Browder, Robert Minor, Alexander Trachtenberg, and myself. The Canadian and American delegations submitted a joint greeting to the Congress, which was broadcast over the radio.

Arles is located in Provence, on the river Rhone, in the south of France, about 500 miles from Paris. It is one of the most historic spots in France. The town was established about 2,400 years ago and has successively been the scene of Celtic, Phoenician, Greek, Roman, and various other civilizations. The place has several famous ruins, notably a big Greek theatre and a huge Roman arena. Arles was for a time the capital of the Roman empire. It was also in this district that the famous hymn of the 1789 French Revolution, the "Marseillaise," was composed. In selecting this historic city for its Congress, the Communist Party emphasized its identification with the traditions and culture of the French people.

The Party interests itself in every phase of the life of the masses and, characteristically, it surrounded its Congress with a whole series of popular activities. Besides rousing speeches by Cachin and Thorez, there were features such as a communal Christmas

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tree (with presents for the children), an industrial exposition, a number of banquets, several theatrical and motion picture productions, many popular meetings and lectures, excursions to neighboring historical places, trips to local museums and monuments, a grand spectacle of folk-dancing, fancy riding, and bull-fights in the Roman Arena.

THE WORK OF THE CONGRESS

Briefly stated, the task the Congress set itself was the organization of the struggle against fascism at home and abroad, through strengthening and energizing the Popular Front, intensifying France's democratic role internationally, establishing the unity of the working class, consolidating the alliance with the peasantry, and building the Communist Party. The order of business of the Congress was as follows:

1. Popular Front France and its mission in the world.
2. The liquidation of the split and the establishment of the unity of the working class.
3. The obligations of the Popular Front toward the peasants of France.
4. The great family of Communists.

Reports upon these four basic questions were delivered, respectively, by Maurice Thorez (General Secretary), Jacques Duclos (Secretary), Renaud Jean (Central Committee member), and Marcel Gitton (Secretary). The reports were rich in political content and were all brilliantly presented. That of Thorez, lasting four hours, especially produced a great ovation, the crowd singing alternately the "Internationale" and the "Marseillaise."

The blazing enthusiasm with which the reports were received and the unanimity of their adoption by the Congress were striking demonstrations of the Bolshevik unity of the French Party. It was quite clear to us foreign observers that the French Party is fully conscious of its great responsibility in the historic task of leading the French masses away from fascist slavery and into socialist freedom, and that it is clear and positive regarding the road that must be traveled.

As the Congress proceeded, innumerable telegrams and other messages of solidarity came pouring in from the masses — from factory workers, from peasant groups, from Socialist Party organizations, from trade unions, etc. I was especially interested in a telegram from a French regiment of soldiers. Greetings from Romain Rolland brought the Congress to its feet in a burst of applause. A grim touch of struggle was lent to the Congress by the pulling through the town of thirteen trucks loaded with food and clothes, bound for Republican Spain, the border of which is only about 150 miles distant.

DEMOCRACY VERSUS FASCISM

Thorez, in his report, showed that the great issue confronting the toiling masses is the question of democracy against fascism. He called for the unity of the French nation in the Popular Front to smash fascism, which originates in the 200 rich families that dominate the country's economic life and resources. French fascism has already been dealt a heavy blow by the Popular Front, but it has not been killed. It remains a deadly menace to the well-being and liberty of the masses.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In dealing with the danger of fascism within France, Thorez handled the question in a very practical manner. As the basis of his argument, he made a running comparison between conditions in Popular Front France and those in fascist Italy and Germany, and he held up the Soviet Union as the revolutionary example of democracy that the democratic French masses must strive to emulate.

Thorez showed how, through their Popular Front, the French workers had won the 40-hour week, vacations with pay, wage increases; had vastly strengthened their trade unions and political parties; and had extended their civil rights. He also recited the gains of the peasants and the middle class groups within the Popular Front. All of which had made life easier for the masses and given them fresh hope for the future.

As against this picture of progress and expanding democracy, Thorez outlined the barbarous course of fascism in the adjoining countries of Germany and Italy; their destruction of the trade unions and cooperatives, their suppression of the toilers' political parties, the wiping out of all civil liberties, the drastic reduction of living standards, the general decline in culture, and the wholesale preparations for war.

But while making this comparison, so deadly for fascism, Thorez did not fail to point out the weaknesses and dangers of the Popular Front. The big capitalists, with rapidly increasing profits, are sabotaging the Popular Front conquests, are raising the cost of living, organizing and strengthening their armed fascist bands of Doriot, de la Rocque, etc., and the government is not taking sufficiently energetic measures to counteract this offensive of reaction. The speaker demanded the integral fulfillment of the Popular Front program agreed upon.

Thorez then proceeded to outline a whole series of the Communist Party's demands for old-age pensions, increased taxes upon the rich, nationalization of various industries, including insurance companies; disarming of the fascist leagues and the imprisonment of their chiefs; and the establishment of the rights of the colonial peoples in North Africa, Indo-China, etc. In this latter respect, Thorez said that the Party's fundamental demand for the colonial peoples was the right of self-determination, the right of independence. But, as Lenin pointed out, "the right of separation does not signify the obligation to separate." The Party proposes to "create the conditions of a free and friendly union between the French and colonial peoples."

That the workers are in a mood to fight for this was shown dramatically during the Congress by a whole series of important strikes in Paris in the chemical, transport, and food industries, as well as in the public services.

Stating that "the Popular Front is not an occasional tactic, an electoral maneuver, but the close and permanent alliance between the working class and the middle classes, which is one of the fundamental conceptions of Leninism," Thorez called for the strengthening of the Popular Front by establishing local Popular Front committees, and by holding a national congress of these committees.

While stressing the necessity of the Popular Front masses to defend and

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

develop democracy under capitalism, Thorez did not fail to emphasize the revolutionary goal of the Communist Party.

"We fight for the future, when our people will know happiness and joy, grace to the free labor of all its sons, reconciled in the communist society of tomorrow. . . .

"The Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Stalin has made the Socialist dream of yesterday the reality of today.

"Lenin, Stalin, the Bolsheviks, were inspired by the glorious example of our Paris Commune. The Communists of France will be inspired by the victorious example of the great Soviet Commune."

THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

The fight against international fascism and war, which is inseparable from the fight against fascism in France, Thorez put in the center of his report. He said that "France, whether it wishes or not, must choose between the front of peace and the front of war; which is the choice between democracy and fascism." Speaking for the Central Committee, Thorez declared it was the world mission of France to fight beside the forces of democracy and peace.

Thorez recalled the historic role of the French Revolutions of 1789 and 1848 in spreading democratic privileges throughout the world. In the present crisis of humanity, he said, France must play a similar liberating role. Together with the U.S.S.R., the suppressed masses in many countries look to democratic, Popular Front France for inspiration and support. But the Popular Front government has not always been conscious of its democratic world mission, notably in the cases of Ethiopia and Spain, where it yielded to the fascist aggressors. Thorez was especially sharp in condemning the so-called policy of non-intervention in Spain, followed successively by the Blum and Chautemps governments. He declared that France's foreign policy had not weakened the aggression of the fascist powers, but strengthened it.

Democracy has not exhausted its role, as so many enemies of the workers declare. The Popular Front is not only a defense, but an extension of democracy. Thorez pointed, besides France, to the U.S.S.R., and said:

"We can say of the Soviet democracy that it is the broadest democracy, because it rests upon new economic and social foundations, on the suppression of exploitation of man by man, that it is the extension of democracy, that it is democracy pushed to the end, to its last stage, that which immediately precedes the perfect communist society."

To Mussolini's boast that "the Europe of tomorrow will be fascist," Thorez answered with a categoric "No, Europe will not be fascist! It is democracy which, again, is going to win in Europe and spread its benefits to the peoples united in peace."

Thorez called upon the Popular Front to establish a foreign policy "democratic and French" for the organization of peace. His emphasis upon the fact that the foreign policy of the French government must be based on the interests of the French nation, which dovetail with those of the masses in other countries, hits in several directions simultaneously. For one thing, it struck at the fascists, who would make France internationally a tail to Hitler's kite; then it clashed with those Socialists, liberals and others who would make France's peace policies dependent upon England's

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wishes; and finally it refuted all those miscellaneous enemies of the Communists—fascists, Trotskyites, and others who, seeking to break the Franco-Soviet pact, allege that our Party strives to make France simply a supporter of Soviet foreign policy.

Thorez outlined in detail the elements of a "democratic and French" international peace policy based upon the principle of collective security. A few of the most important of his proposals were: the abandonment of secret diplomacy, the strengthening of the League of Nations, the application of international law in Europe and the Far East, the opening of the French frontier to Republican Spain, the renewal of Franco-British relations on a new basis, collaboration between the United States and France in the Far East on the basis of President Roosevelt's Chicago speech, and, he said, "the Popular Front should show, conforming to the will of the people, its attachment to the Franco-Soviet pact, the surest guarantee of peace for our country and for Europe." Thorez stated that the Communist Party was willing to enter the Popular Front government.

ONE PARTY OF THE WORKING CLASS

On the basic question of unifying the Communist and Socialist Parties into one party, the Congress report was made by Jacques Duclos, who is one of the three secretaries of the Communist Party and also Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies. Duclos stressed the vast importance of unification, showing how it would enormously strengthen the whole Popular Front and facilitate the achievement of its program. He said:

"Think of the power that would be represented by a sole party, made up of the 450,000 Communists, youths and adults, and the 300,000 Socialists, youths and adults, fraternally united.

"Think, too, of the power that would be represented by one party, with a parliamentary group of 260 Deputies, with a journal like *L'Humanite,* with a circulation of 425,000 and another journal like *Le Populaire,* with a circulation of 200,000.

"Think, also, of the attractions that such a united party would exercise upon the multitudes of workers who would come with hearts full of joy and hope to take their places under the flag of the reconstituted unity."

In thus arguing for the great surge forward that would come from uniting the two parties, Duclos was able to refer to the splendid effects of unity on the industrial field. Before unity the two rival federations together hardly counted 1,000,000 members between them. But after unity was achieved they immediately and spectacularly shot up to 5,000,000 members.

Duclos gave an extended resume of the struggles of the French workers, from the earliest stages of their labor movement, for industrial and political unity. Arriving at contemporaneous developments, he showed that the responsibility for the present split situation, which took place at the congress of Tours in 1920, does not rest upon the Communists. At that time the delegates voted 3,208 to 1,022 for affiliation to the Third International; but the reformist minority refused to accept the congress decision and the split became a fact.

During the next fourteen years the Communist Party made no less than 27 separate advances to the Socialist Party with proposals for unity of ac-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion. But the S.P. leaders rejected all these proposals, until July, 1934, when, in the face of the big fascist offensive and under heavy pressure from their own rank and file, they finally signed a pact of joint action with the Communists.

Since then the Communist Party has also made many proposals to unite the two parties into one. But the Socialist Party leaders have been cagey and evasive. Especially have Trotskyite and extreme Right reformist influences opposed unity. Under the constant pressure of the Communist Party for unity the Socialist Party leaders, however, finally set up a negotiations committee. At their recent Marseilles congress they also adopted conditions for unity which they believed the Communists could not accept. But the Communist Party did accept, and, moreover, accordingly made the most concrete proposals for immediately merging the two parties. Whereupon, to extricate themselves from the unwelcome unity situation, the Socialist Party leaders, seizing as a pretext some criticism made by Dimitroff, head of the Comintern, against reactionary Second International leaders, a short while ago liquidated the unity committee and broke off the unity negotiations—without, however, giving up the policy of common action with the Communist Party in the Popular Front.

This action by the Socialist Party was joyfully greeted by the employers' interests and was sorrowfully received by the workers. But the Communist Party will not be discouraged in its unity efforts. One united party is a burning necessity and it will be brought about despite all reactionary opposition. Amidst tremendous applause Duclos pledged the Communist Party "to work, heart to heart, with our Socialist brothers until unity is achieved."

COMMUNISTS AND CATHOLICS

An important question, much discussed in and around the Congress, was that of united front action between the Communist and Catholic masses. This is the policy of the "extended hand," which promises to play a big role in further strengthening the Popular Front. The Communist Party is the great unifying force among the French anti-fascist masses. It was the main element in establishing trade union unity, it was the initiator of the Popular Front, it is the great champion of Socialist-Communist unity, and now it is determined to win the Catholic workers and peasants for this unity.

For a considerable time the Communist Party has been persistently working to establish close cooperative relations with the toiling Catholic masses. This has already produced such favorable results that even the Pope himself has been obliged to pay attention to it. Although the Pope's recent remarks about "collaboration" were highly equivocal, they nevertheless greatly alarmed many reactionary high French Catholic clericals, who hastened to pronounce themselves against any working with the Communists. But the masses of their followers are responding, nevertheless. In this matter, Thorez said in the Congress:

"It is known that we are Communists, partisans of philosophical materialism, atheists, lay people. On the doctrinal and philo-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sophical plane we, contrary to all others, never have and never will make any concessions in principle. We have the solidly established conviction that our doctrine provides the sole national scientific explanation of the world and its evolution. We only want to use in our propaganda weapons exclusively ideological. We have already proved that we are thus following the counsels of our masters, of Marx, Engels, Lenin, as well as Guesde. War must not be declared against religion (which would only be an Anarchist phrase), said Lenin; we must work to assemble, to unite all the workers, regardless of their beliefs, against the real enemy, capitalism and its detestable product, fascism.

"We welcome with joy into our ranks the workers, whatever may be their philosophical or religious convictions, whether they believe in God or not, whether or not they go to the church, the temple, or the synagogue, if only they are determined to put an end to the agony of capitalism and to erect upon its ruins social property and social production."

THE PEASANT QUESTION

The Arles Congress paid much attention to the peasant question, the reporter on this subject being Renaud Jean, Central Committee member and Chairman of the Agricultural Committee of the Chamber of Deputies. Jean made a long report of which space limitations here forbid giving even an outline. He portrayed in detail what the Popular Front had done for the small farmers and agricultural workers, who form such a vital sector in French economic and political life. He declared that the peasants, especially because of means applied to regulate production, fix prices, and restrict speculation in foodstuffs, were considerably better off under the Popular Front government.

But, highly critical, he declared that great grievances still exist. He outlined a detailed agricultural program, including such proposals as moratoriums on debts; reduction of rents and taxes; no foreclosures for debts; the right of renters to re-rent their farms; reduced prices for fertilizer; the cheapening of farm credits; abolition of speculation in grains and other farm products; collective selling by farmers; strengthening of the cooperatives; limitation of the hours of agricultural laborers; insurance against hail, drought, and other calamities.

Jean stated that the great obstacle to improved conditions for the agricultural population was the resistance of the reactionary Senate, which constantly blocks proposals of the more progressive Chamber of Deputies. This resistance must be broken. The Senate, he said, resists the demands of the peasants far more than those of industrial workers. Among the practical organizational measures, Jean urged full Party support for National Farmers' Day on January 30, organized by the Confederation of Peasants-Workers to develop backing for the demands of the peasants and agricultural workers.

THE GREAT FAMILY OF COMMUNISTS

It was under this picturesque title that Marcel Gitton, Communist Party Secretary, made the report on organization. In this article I can give only the briefest indications of his two-hour speech, which was rich in the facts and currents of Communist Party life.

Gitton portrayed a picture of real unity and healthy growth of the Party. There are no factions or internal groupings of any consequence, and the Party is extending its organization into every corner of France. At its

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

last congress (Villeurbanne, in January, 1936) the Party had 86,902 members; in December, 1936, it had 288,483; and now it has 341,000. In October, 1935, the Party comprised 4,221 units; by October, 1936, the figure had mounted to 10,776; and in October, 1937, it was 12,992. The Young Communist League has a membership of 85,455, as against 25,816 in January, 1936; the Young Girls of France, 17,527; and the Young Peasants (newly organized) an estimated 10,000.

The reporter stated that from the point of view of circulation, *L'Humanite* is now the third largest morning paper in France. In the space of three years it has more than doubled its number of readers—from 200,000 in 1934 to 425,000, its average circulation for the first nine months of 1937. On Sunday, December 19, *L'Humanite* had a circulation of 952,455. In 1936 this flourishing paper made a profit of 495,800 francs. The Party has 70 other papers, mostly regional, with a combined circulation of 495,800.

Gitton also reported solid progress in election and parliamentary activities. In the 1936 elections the Party polled 1,502,558 votes, as against 776,630 in 1932, and the number of its members of the Chamber of Deputies leaped up from 10 to 73. The Party also has two members in the Senate. In the 1937 local elections, despite a fierce Red-baiting campaign by the reactionaries, the Party increased its vote by 35,088 over that of 1936. In 324 local communities the Party has a majority of the representatives, and in 555 more it has minorities.

Gitton critically pointed out many errors made and weaknesses displayed by the Party in its multitudinous activities. He especially laid great stress upon the urgent necessity of giving a Marxist-Leninist education to the vast masses of militant workers who have recently streamed into the Party and the trade unions.

CONCLUSION

The Congress of the French Communist Party is bound to have strong international results. It was a practical demonstration of the effectiveness of the Popular Front both in organizing the masses for struggle against fascism and war, and, what goes inseparably with the former, in building the Communist Party into a strong mass party.

At the Congress I was greatly impressed by the realism and hard common sense of the French Communists. They are not content "to pay themselves with words," however radical-sounding the words may be. With their feet on the ground, they are utilizing every means to mobilize the masses for the decisive struggle for democracy and against fascism — a struggle the victorious outcome of which will pave the way for socialism. Their Bolshevik realism was shown on many questions—by their stand on nationalism, on religion, on the everyday demands of the toilers. Thorez gave voice to the latter phase neatly in discussing the radical proposals urged by the Socialist Party to be added to the program of the Popular Front. While agreeing that the Communist Party, as a revolutionary Party, must support these propositions, nevertheless, he pointed out that "instead of putting on paper formulas apparently more revolutionary, it

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would be better to apply effectively the more modest measures that figure already in the Popular Front."

I was also much impressed by the splendid political initiative being shown by the Party, with its present policies as well as its recent activities. The Communist Party is indeed the vanguard of the French proletariat. This it has amply demonstrated in the past by its militant and successful struggle for trade union unity and for the formation of the Popular Front. The Party is showing this vital initiative now in its determined fight to unify the Socialist and Communist Parties, to enforce the everyday demands of the workers and farmers, to win the peasants and the Catholic masses, to develop a strong policy of collective security against war by the Popular Front government, etc. Especially in this basic matter of exercising political leadership, so fundamental to the building of the Communist Party and its influence, the Communist Parties in all the capitalist countries would do well to study the proceedings of the Congress of Arles.

Of course, the French Communist Party has made mistakes, and, being made up of human beings, it will continue to do so. But its current mistakes are of a minor character. The main thing is that the Party is obviously on the right track. It is giving a daily demonstration of first class Communist work, and the Comintern may well be proud of such a Party.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE STEEL WORKERS IN CONVENTION

BY B. K. GEBERT

In mid-December there took place in the nation's capital of steel—Pittsburgh—the convention of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee of the C.I.O. In opening the convention, Phillip Murray, Chairman of the S.W.O.C., reminded the assembly that but eighteen months ago "we had no members, we had no lodges, we had no collective bargaining agreement to protect the interests of the workers in this great industry." This outstanding labor leader, International Vice-President of the United Mine Workers of America, was proud to report that during these eighteen months 1,080 lodges were created and the S.W.O.C. has won collective bargaining agreements with U. S. Steel and 444 other corporations, covering over 550,000 workers employed in the industry. Under these agreements the working hours have been reduced from forty-eight to forty a week; wages have been increased on a yearly basis nearly $200,000,000; seniority rights have been recognized; union grievance machinery for the protection of the members has been provided, and the yellow company unions, created to prevent bona fide organization of the workers, have been destroyed. The steel workers industrial union has been established in this basic industry, former citadel of the open shop, and is here to stay.

For over fifty years the steel workers, in such gigantic struggles as those of 1892, 1901, 1909, 1919, and in the smaller but significant struggles of 1933 and 1934, attempted to establish their right to organize and to win a measure of control over their working conditions, but in all these struggles they were defeated. The successful campaign of the S.W.O.C. in the last eighteen months was possible because the C.I.O. and its leader John L. Lewis inspired the confidence of the workers and their determination to free themselves from the domination of the steel trusts, the most powerful trusts in the country. No small credit for this achievement must be given to the United Mine Workers of America, which in the true spirit of class solidarity rendered immense assistance to the steel workers. The miners taxed themselves with a special assessment and dug into their treasury to provide funds for the gigantic organizational drive. Moreover they released some of their most experienced organizers and leaders, headed by Phillip Murray, for service in the S.W.O.C. The leaders of the convention and the delegates were by no means self-satisfied. They were right-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fully proud of the historic results achieved, but they also saw clearly that there are still great tasks ahead. This was well expressed in the opening speech of Phillip Murray:

"I do not want this delegation," he declared, "to get the impression that the work of organizing this great steel industry is at an end. You know it isn't. I know it isn't. It has just begun."

He urged upon the 875 delegates assembled that "my life and your lives should be dedicated toward the building up of a strong, powerful union in the steel industry."

With complete confidence and enthusiasm the assembled delegates pledged themselves to realize this task.

When the national steel convention met, the problem of mass unemployment in the steel industry had again become acute. Production had dropped to the level of 1932, as can be seen from the following table:

STEEL OPERATING RATE

Period	*Per cent of Capacity*
Depression year 1921	37
"Boom" year 1929	88
Depression year 1932	20
"Recovery" year 1936	69
November, 1937	about 27

The decline in employment was even greater. A thorough survey by the S.W.O.C. of 526 plants, normally employing 546,903 workers, showed that in the month of November, 1937, they employed full-time only 84,641 workers or 15 per cent, while 309,007 or 57 per cent were employed part-time, many of them working a day or two a week, and 153,222 or 28 per cent were laid off. These mass lay-offs brought misery and hunger to thousands of workers' families, throwing many of them on the over-crowded relief lists, and that in the face of the gigantic profits secured from the sweat and blood of the workers during the year 1937. Twenty-five steel corporations had a net profit for the first nine months of 1937 of $225,109,719, as against $89,857,760 for the same period in the year of 1936—an increase of profits of 145 per cent. U.S. Steel profits increased 219 per cent, Bethlehem Steel, 220 per cent.

The $5.00 minimum day wage established under the contracts of the S.W.O.C. is by no means a universal standard in the steel industry. Bethlehem Steel as well as other corporations which as yet are not under union contract are paying $4.50 a day and even less. The steel trusts would like to utilize the present mass unemployment to cut wages, as is the usual procedure on the part of big business. If this has not yet been done, the reason was given away by the organ of big business, *American Machinist*, in its editorial of November 11, 1937, which declares:

"Wages were cut viciously in 1932. Is it reasonable to expect a similar slash now? Hardly, with a government friendly to labor, and *labor unions several times stronger than at depression's bottom.*"

The struggles against unemployment received serious attention at the convention. Phillip Murray in his report to the convention reminded the delegates that in addition to the mass lay-offs caused by the recession, there is also "technological" unemployment, that machines are displacing men. He pointed out:

"It is terrifying to watch a hot strip mill roll, hot strips produced at the rate of 2,500 tons in twenty-four hours with only 126 men, and at the same time to be told that 4,512

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

men in a twenty-four hour period are required on 96 sheet mills of the conventional type to produce an equivalent tonnage."

This process is taking place today on a large scale. He further pointed out that there would be 27 hot strip mills with a capacity of 12,735,000 tons of hot strip annually, which will mean a further displacement of tens of thousands of the steel workers, that within the next three years the steel corporations are planning to do the work with 15,000 strip mill workers which formerly was done by 100,000, a reduction of 85 per cent of the workers in that category alone.

The convention faced this grave problem squarely, dealing with it in a resolution which demands *security of employment*, declaring that "the industrial and financial leaders of this country are again demonstrating their complete bankruptcy of any program which can or will assure to the workers of this country security of employment," thus placing the responsibility for the mass lay-offs where it properly belongs. The resolution demands that: "There must be some power somewhere in this land of ours that will go over and above and beyond those corporations with all their influence and power and provide jobs and insure the right to live for workers," and "that the United States government must recognize as a cardinal principle the right of every worker to security of employment to allow such worker a sufficient income to permit him to maintain his family on a decent standard of living." This resolution shows that the steel workers' convention was seeking a basic solution of the problem.

The slogan "the right to work" must, however, be explained much more deeply than we have done up until now. Karl Marx, some eighty-five years ago, pointed out that the demand of "the right to work" is "the first clumsy formula wherein the revolutionary aspirations of the proletariat are summarized." He commented as follows:

> "But behind the right to work stands the power over capital; behind the power over capital the appropriation of the means of production, their subjection to the associated working class and therefore the abolition of the wage labor as well as capital and of their mutual relationship."*

Full realization by the working class of the revolutionary implication of the right-to-work slogan, which has been raised by John L. Lewis and inferred by President Roosevelt, would arouse the revolutionary aspirations of the proletariat in the struggle against capitalism. However, it is necessary to develop the broadest possible movement on the part of the entire working class population and to win the support of the toiling people as a whole so as really to make this a slogan for the entire people. In this connection, it must be pointed out to the American proletariat, to the American people, to the progressive leaders that this solution has been realized in the Soviet Union, where there is no unemployment because the industry belongs to the people and every citizen-worker and collective farmer there has a constitutional guarantee of the right to work.

The resolution on unemployment does not confine itself to the demand of the right to work. It also outlines

* Karl Marx, *Class Struggles in France*, p. 68, International Publishers, New York.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

practical steps for the day-to-day struggle for adequate relief and relief jobs jointly with workers of other industries. The resolution on this question reads as follows:

"1. Establish a method of providing protection to our unemployed members in the local lodges, sub-regional offices and national offices and to engage in such legislative or organizational activities that may be necessary to secure adequate federal, state and local appropriations for relief, public works and whatever other form of public assistance the situation requires; and

"2. Establish in each local lodge an unemployment committee that will register every member furloughed or let off from work for purposes of rehiring when employment picks up, and in the meantime aid any member whose family is in want to secure adequate public assistance.

"3. The unemployment committee shall cooperate with all other local groups of unemployed workers."

On the question of technological unemployment, the resolution declares that:

"The increasing productivity in this country because of our inventive genius presents the question as to what the proper normal working day should be for labor to afford greater employment among more workers and to permit more free time for the workers and their families to enjoy the full cultural and social benefits that may be achieved in this country through a decent standard of living."

It therefore demands:

". . . the federal government to make an immediate, thorough-going survey of curtailed job opportunities in specific industries through technological improvements."

And finally:

". . . that Congress shall pass a law for a universal six-hour day and thirty-hour week for all industries in interstate commerce *without any decrease in the established wages and a guaranteed minimum wage.*"

Related to the problem of unemployment is also another resolution adopted by the convention, demanding an appropriation of five billion dollars for building workers' homes throughout the country, this undertaking to be carried out under a United States Housing Authority to eliminate capitalist profiteering.

The organization of the steel union marked not only economic advancement of the workers. It also marked an end in many respects of the company domination of communities in many parts of the country, particularly in Western Pennsylvania, where the steel workers together with other trade unionists, acting through Labor's Non-Partisan League, and with the progressive forces within the Democratic Party, were able to elect large numbers of their own representatives to the local governments. The classic example of that is at Duquesne, Pa., where in 1919 the Mayor declared, "Jesus Christ could not speak for the A. F. of L." But in 1937, the steel workers, for the first time in the history of that town, elected an S.W.O.C. organizer as mayor of the town, winning also control of the City Council; and now there is complete freedom of organization for the workers in that town as well as an improvement of conditions. This is indicative of what can be done in every industrial community and center throughout the country, once the workers are organized and begin to exercise their power.

On the basis of these experiences the convention adopted a resolution

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on political action on the part of the working class, which declares:

"WHEREAS, the reactionary statements and policies on the part of some of the elected representatives of the people in Congress and in local and state offices, who are deserting the progressive platforms on which they were elected, make it extremely imperative that labor engage on the political field to protect their present economic position and to assure the progressive advancement of their interests;

"WHEREAS, there is an identity of interests between the desire of labor to achieve a decent standard of living through increased purchasing power and the desire of the farmers who similarly toil for a living to be able to sell their products to labor, and the reactionary and vicious industrial and financial leaders of the country are determined to defeat the demands of both farmers and labor by creating an apparent conflict between them;

"WHEREAS, labor has amply demonstrated its potential power and prestige in its participation in local elections in the recent November elections such as in New York City, Pittsburgh and other innumerable industrial cities and towns in electing liberal and progressive candidates who have definitely stood upon a program of defending the interests of the workers and other progressive and liberal elements in the communities."

Therefore, the resolution urges that:

"All other progressive and liberal groups and elements in the local communities be impressed with the necessity and encouraged, for their own protection and for the protection of all democratic and progressive institutions, to ally themselves with labor and farmers in the activity and program of the Labor's Non-Partisan League."

This resolution should be taken to heart, not only by the steel workers, but by the entire labor movement, because it indicates the basis upon which the People's movement against reaction and fascism can really be set in motion and find organizational expression in the communities, counties, states and nationally.

The convention also outlined a program for state legislation, calling for a struggle around the following points:

1. A bill establishing a State Labor Relations Board to prevent unfair labor practices and authorizing elections among employees in industries engaged in intra-state commerce.
2. A bill limiting the authority of the courts to issue injunctions in labor disputes.
3. A bill prohibiting the eviction of persons who are unemployed and involved in labor disputes.
4. A bill protecting civil liberties and prohibiting any local laws which may interfere with the free exercise of civil liberties.
5. A bill limiting and regulating appointments of deputy sheriffs and prohibiting payment by private corporations for deputy sheriffs' salaries.
6. A bill limiting and regulating activities of private detectives, private police and private guards.
7. A bill incorporating collective bargaining provisions in contracts between the state and private individuals.
8. A bill protecting the payment of wages by employers to employees.

In line with this general program and militant tone, the convention adopted a resolution against the fascist aggressors who are threatening to spread war into all corners of the world. The resolution, condemning fascist aggression in general, and specifically the Japanese undeclared war on the Chinese people, calls for a boycott of Japanese goods. The resolution reads:

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"WHEREAS, during recent years the civilized world has witnessed the continued aggressive actions on the part of fascist nations of the world, such as Germany, Italy and Japan, to impose their vicious principles and policies upon other democratic countries; and

"WHEREAS, such encroachments by these fascist nations have even extended to wars of aggression with smaller nations and subjugating the peoples of such weaker nations in the most brutal and inhuman manner; and

"WHEREAS, the Japanese nation, of these fascist aggressors has, during the past few months, culminated its policy in its undeclared war on the Chinese people with the most uncivilized and barbarous tactics in brutally bombing non-military cities and killing and maiming thousands of women and children, destroying hospitals and unprotected zones;

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

"RESOLVED, that this convention does hereby most severely condemn the viciousness of all these fascist nations for their barbarous and uncivilized policies and principles and specifically condemns the Japanese action in the unwarranted and unjustified attack upon the Chinese people, and BE IT

"FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Steel Workers Organizing Committee does hereby approve and join in with the labor organizations and other liberal organizations throughout the world to participate in a boycott of Japanese manufactured goods in this country."

On this resolution there was quite a discussion. A number of delegates spoke enthusiastically for it. But there was one delegate who proposed to "amend" it by including condemnation of "Communism and also other isms." The chairman of the convention, Phillip Murray, declared the amendment out of order and this was greeted with tremendous enthusiasm by the entire convention.

The convention likewise adopted a resolution against war, expressing *"the wholehearted desire of the American people for international peace."* But this resolution, notwithstanding its peace purposes, expresses also the political backwardness of some progressives of this country who in their opposition to war approach this question wrongly and, instead of assisting actually in the struggle for peace, create a stumbling block because they do not yet realize that the road to peace lies in the slogan enunciated by Comrade Browder: *"Keep America out of war by keeping war out of the world!"*

In practical application this means that the United States shall exercise its power, its influence, its prestige to rally the democratic countries in cooperation with the Soviet Union's peace policy, in a united effort against fascist aggressors, that is, for collective security against the bandit fascists, Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, and the Japanese imperialists. Unfortunately, instead of endorsing the Chicago speech of President Roosevelt, which made him an outstanding anti-fascist leader in the capitalist world, the convention, under isolationist influences, went on record for a constitutional amendment "requiring a national referendum on the question of whether this country should engage in any war other than one of defense against invasion of this country." But will such a position in any way be effective in securing peace, in checking the aggression of the fascist powers, which is threatening to engulf the world in a new general war?

Proposals such as the Ludlow amendment to the constitution, first of all, will not prevent the United States from entering a war, if a President, as Commander-in-Chief of all the armed forces of this country, will

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be minded to send armed troops into any territory, as Wilson did in regard to Mexico and the Soviet Union. These days, wars are not even declared. The fascist dictatorships simply make their march into other countries, attack and spread devastation and slaughter people—as witness, Ethiopia, Spain, and China. Such an amendment to the Constitution will create illusions of protection against war, but, far from being a measure of democracy and peace, it will tie the hands of the progressive forces against checking the onslaught of bloody fascist dictators upon weaken democratic countries. The best way really to secure international peace, which the convention desired to do, is by cooperation on the part of the U.S. government with the Soviet Union, France, England, Czechoslovakia, Republican Spain, China, and other countries for collective security against the fascist war lords of Germany, Italy, and Japan, who, in the words of President Roosevelt, must be quarantined.

Only brief mention can be given here to some of the other important resolutions.

The convention called for adherence to the contracts entered into by the union. It sharply condemned the state and local authorities who acted as strike-breakers in the recent strikes, specifically Mayor Kelly of Chicago, Mayor Dan Shields of Johnstown, Pa., and Governor Davey of Ohio, and declared that "this convention regards the silence of government officials, both state and federal, on the South Chicago massacre and the seven other murders of the steel workers during the strike as a gravely disturbing omen." It condemned the use of the national guard against the workers, demanding that Congress "prohibit the appropriation of any funds to any state for the use or support of the National Guard of such state which is utilized in any industrial dispute or receives monies other than from public funds." A resolution on civil liberties calls for the continuation of the work of the LaFollette Senate Civil Liberties Committee. A resolution was passed demanding freedom for Mooney and Billings.

In a resolution which endorsed the National Youth Administration, American Youth Congress and the Catholic Youth Order, because these organizations "contributed toward education of thousands of youth in industry and other areas," the convention raised the question of a special approach toward young workers, calling upon the lodges "to establish recreational, educational and sports activities for the youth of our movement." A resolution expressing gratitude to "the women who worked and struggled for the S.W.O.C.," calls for the organization of women's auxiliaries.

Realizing the need for developing educational activities among the steel workers, the convention called for cooperation with the C.I.O. to "establish for all its members a broad and extensive educational program," demanding at the same time the appropriation of funds by Congress for a permanent Federal Arts and Workers' Educational program.

Several resolutions adopted by the Convention indicate increasing appreciation of the need to combat discrimination against Negroes. The

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

demand of equal rights for Negro workers in the trade unions found expression in the following resolution:

"WHEREAS, the employers constantly strive to deprive the workers of their full economic strength and seek all means to split one group of workers from another, and the most frequent weapon used by the employers to accomplish this end is to create false conflicts between Negro and white workers; and

"WHEREAS, the workers of this country will obtain their powerful labor organizations only when they have united within such labor organizations all workers regardless of their race, creed, color or nationality; and

"WHEREAS, the Negro workers, because of the fact that we have not as yet brought them into powerful labor organizations throughout the country, have not received any economic or political justice nor enjoyed the benefit of any constitutional or civil liberties in this country as indicated in the most flagrant and outstanding miscarriage of justice perpetrated in the convictions of the Scottsboro boys, which cases were twice reversed by the Supreme Court of the United States, and on the third occasion, the Supreme Court refused to grant a hearing or review for such cases; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

"RESOLVED, that this convention specifically condemns the actions of the courts in connection with the Scottsboro cases and urges the Governor of the State of Alabama to issue a pardon to the convicted defendants; and BE IT

"FURTHER RESOLVED, that this convention wholeheartedly and completely endorses the policy of organizing into powerful, industrial labor organizations in this country all workers regardless of race, creed, color, or nationality."

The convention unanimously adopted a resolution demanding the passage of the anti-lynch bill by Congress, and calling for the wiping out of "the shameful scourge of lynch from our national life."

In another resolution the convention endorsed the National Negro Congress and expressed its appreciation for the assistance given to the S.W.O.C. campaign by the National Negro Congress and "many fraternal, social, civic and church organizations" which supported the drive to organize the steel workers. The convention pledged "its wholehearted support to such organizations."

The delegates assembled in the city of steel were very much alive to the need of unifying the labor movement, and they took a clearcut stand on this vital question, unanimously endorsing the unity action initiated by the C.I.O. conference at Atlantic City and the position of its committee on unification.

But the steel workers have not forgotten their experiences with the A. F. of L. leadership. They remembered that before they could establish their union they had fought for a long time —in vain—for the opportunity to organize into an industrial union within the A. F. of L. Many of the delegates may have remembered that at the Atlantic City convention of the A. F. of L. in 1935, Mr. Leonard, Secretary-Treasurer of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, proposed to "call the bluff" of the steel workers. Phillip Murray, speaking in favor of the Minority Report on the question of industrial unions in the mass production industries, had just argued in favor of an industrial union charter for the steel workers, pleading: "Give them an opportunity, grant them a charter, give them a chance to develop along industrial lines." In reply, Mr. Leonard, who represented the organization which was organized in 1876 and which at the end of sixty years had a member-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ship of only 10,000, asked for support to the reactionary leadership of the Amalgamated Association, not in order to organize the steel workers, but because he was convinced, so he said, that they did not want to organize, that they could not be organized. "I am asking the convention to call their bluff," said Mr. Leonard. "At least we can call the bluff of the steel workers, and that is just what I mean—call their bluff." (!)

Well, at the A. F. of L. convention in 1935 the reactionary craft union leaders won the day. But the steel workers, as the workers in auto, rubber, and other industries, gave their answer under the leadership of the C.I.O., and the convention in Pittsburgh registered the fact that over half a million steel workers joined the union in a period of eighteen months.

In the light of these experiences, the convention, while declaring their determination to achieve unity, deemed it necessary to resolve that:

". . . the Committee for Industrial Organization and its affiliated organizations cannot and must not make any compromise on the issue of organization of the unorganized workers in the mass production and basic industries along industrial lines; and

" . . . that none of the 4,000,000 workers who have organized under the banner of the Committee for Industrial Organization on the basis of the fundamental principle of the Committee for Industrial Organization shall be deserted and that all of such workers must be protected by all of the unions now affiliated with the Committee for Industrial Organization in accomplishing the goal of a unified labor movement; and

". . . that this convention believes that all of the workers of the American Federation of Labor are wholeheartedly in support of the proposal of the Committee for Industrial Organization for a unified labor movement along the lines which have been suggested by the C.I.O. committee and that it is merely the desire of the reactionary and bureaucratic leaders of the American Federation of Labor to maintain their positions of power and control which prevents the achievements of the goal which would be so beneficial to the workers of this country."

The convention did not overlook the problems facing the union in Canada. Of 1,080 lodges of the S.W.O.C., 464 are located in the Northeastern area, 562 lodges in the Western region, and 54 in the Southern district. Canada, with 24 lodges, is included in the Western region. The convention adopted a resolution expressing "its appreciation of the contribution which the Trade and Labor Congress of Canada is making to the International Trade Union unity movement." In another resolution the convention empowered the S.W.O.C. lodges to call a convention of all the Canadian lodges in the immediate future in order to determine an organizational program and policy conforming to the spirit and principles of the resolutions adopted by the convention and determined by the economic and social conditions prevailing in Canada.

One of the highlights of the convention was the speech delivered by John L. Lewis in which he pointed out the danger of fascism, not only abroad *but at home,* that the fascist-minded elements are at work and that they are conspiring against the republic. He also made a statement in his speech declaring that *"labor in America can do what it decides to do."*

It must be clear to anybody reading this account of the convention that it was a truly progressive, militant convention. This was made possible

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

because of the unity that prevailed at the convention. The unity of the convention, the unity between the leaders and delegates, was demonstrated from the beginning to the end. But not everyone was pleased with the unity. The *Socialist Call* printed an article by Arthur G. McDowell, National Labor Secretary of the Socialist Party, according to whom, it was not really a convention. He declared *"the men who staged this convention (for it was a demonstration and a pageant rather than a convention) did well to unfold the drama here."* So that is all there was to it. But more than that, Mr. McDowell is hoping that the next convention will be different, that is, with some disunity brought in. *"The convention was a smooth running whole with a unanimity which it is safe to predict will not be duplicated in another convention. . . ."—Socialist Call,* December 25, 1937.

We Communists will do everything possible to preserve this unity for the next convention. We know that the workers in steel will appreciate it, even if it might displease McDowell.

There was a group of wreckers, formerly members of the now forgotten Muste group, who have connected themselves with the counter-revolutionary Trotskyites. There were only three or four of them, and they attempted to organize a caucus *against* the policies of the convention and its leaders. They were not successful. They could not get the support of the delegates because no sane person would line up with a group that attempted to undermine the convention and divide its ranks when it was faced with the gigantic task of strengthening the union, particularly with the view to entrenching itself within the plants of the independent steel corporations such as National Steel, Bethlehem Steel, Youngstown Sheet and Tube, American Rolling Mills, Republic Steel, in short, in "Little Steel," which, like Henry Ford in auto, challenges the right to collective bargaining. Anyone who came to this convention with the objective to undermine the present leadership of the S.W.O.C. and the program of the convention was helping the steel magnates, the bloody Weir, Grace, Girdler, whom the convention correctly named as responsible for the murder of seventeen union men in the last strike. But this fact that even three or four counter-revolutionary Trotskyites came as delegates to the convention must put on guard the entire union, the S.W.O.C. membership and leaders, against this outfit who are sworn enemies of the C.I.O. and the S.W.O.C. Even the slightest concession to this group means to permit the development of the enemies of the union. The Trotskyites, as in every other situation, showed their faces at the convention as allies of Weir, of Girdler. It is true, they did not dare ask for the floor of the convention to present their point of view, but privately they attempted to speak to the delegates and rally them against Phillip Murray and other miners among the organizers of the S.W.O.C. They attempted to develop a fight against those who contributed most to the successful building of the union. There must be more vigilance on the part of everyone concerned, to eliminate the gang of agents of the enemy within the union.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The convention unanimously went on record authorizing the present leadership of the S.W.O.C. together with representatives of the lodges to negotiate *"the best wage agreement possible."* There must be complete support to this decision on the part of every lodge, there can and there must be only one authority, one leadership, within that union. The Trotskyite elements who attempted to create discord and division at the convention were also against authorizing the S.W.O.C. leadership together with the representatives of the lodges to discuss the question of the future agreements with the U.S. Steel and the other 444 steel manufacturing, fabricating and processing corporations. This is of special importance in view of the concerted effort on the part of the corporations to weaken even the present contract and in view of the mass unemployment in steel.

The resolutions adopted at the convention were not a product of the Resolutions Committee alone. Over 1,700 resolutions were submitted to the convention by the lodges, including 837 resolutions dealing with the questions of wages and conditions of labor in the industry. The other resolutions dealt with all kinds of problems confronting the people, but the second largest set of resolutions dealt with the question of political action on the part of labor, which signifies the awakening on the part of labor to the need and necessity of political action.

All these we Communists more than greet. We are particularly proud that we contributed toward building the industrial union in the steel industry. Great credit for this must go to the Chairman of our Party, William Z. Foster, the leader of the great 1919 steel strike, who has formulated, not only the proper approach, but actually a program for our Party on how to assist practically in the organization of the workers in the steel industry. The contribution of Comrade Foster in the steel drive cannot be overstressed.

The organization of steel unions is really the greatest achievement of the labor movement in recent years, and it was accomplished under the banner of the C.I.O. But the problem is by no means fully solved. The leaders of the S.W.O.C. are aware of it, the membership must be aware that the problem of organizing the steel workers has actually just begun. There is the problem of consolidating the lodges, of making them function, of having proper committees in the respective departments and mills, of adjusting the grievances of the workers, of completing the job of the organization of "Little Steel," of securing contracts, of paving the way for the establishment of an international union, part of the C.I.O., in the steel industry. The adopted rules and methods of procedure for the lodges of the S.W.O.C. are only a step in the direction toward the establishment of an autonomous union in the industry.

The Communist Party, assisting in all this work in the most constructive manner, must not overlook for one moment the fact that for the building of the union, for its consolidation, for entering into political action, the building of the Communist Party becomes indispensable. Indeed, without strengthening and building the Communist Party among the steel workers

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

further progress will be hampered. In every steel mill of the country there should be a Party unit, consisting of the most advanced, most devoted, most sincere workers. We Communists have no desire to control the labor movement. Our objective and task are to build this movement, assist in building, cooperating and working with everybody who is willing, and in practice shows readiness, to work and build.

There is a need for popularization of the decisions of the convention. They should not remain only the property and knowledge of the thousand people that attended that convention. Not only union members should be acquainted with this historic convention of the S.W.O.C. but every non-union worker, every steel worker and every steel worker's family should know what the convention has decided. Furthermore, the decisions of this convention should be popularized in other labor organizations, particularly in the C.I.O. but also within the unions of the A. F. of L.

The program adopted by the S.W.O.C. fits with some modifications the problems facing the workers in other industries, particularly in the mass production industries. There are lessons to be drawn from it. We are looking to the next convention which will register further advances, further progress of the steel workers' union which, under the banner of the C.I.O., and with the other growing industrial unions, is an indispensable part of the developing People's Front in America.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE STORM CENTER OF THE CUBAN CRISIS

BY BLAS ROCA

General Secretary
Communist Party of Cuba

AGAIN the situation is tense in Cuba, a situation facing important and decisive changes; and the solution is imminent.

Batista, chief enemy of the democratic liberties of our people, was forced to state in public, in a speech he delivered in Camaguey in the middle of 1937: "We are in the storm center of the Cuban crisis."

That statement is even truer today. This can be understood even by the least observant, no matter how slight his familiarity with the development of Cuban politics during recent years, if he is only aware of the declaration by the four major political parties in Cuba against participation in the elections to be held next March.

These parties are: the Republican Action of Dr. Miguel Mariano Gomez, elected President of Cuba in January, 1936, and ousted by Batista in December of the same year; the Republican Democratic Party of General Menocal, former President of the Republic,* the Cuban Revolutionary Party (Authentic) of Dr. Grau San Martin, former President of Cuba, at present exiled in Miami; and the Popular Revolutionary Bloc.

But significant as this boycott is, it is only a detail in an extremely complicated situation, which brings into relief the formidable and rapidly-growing popular discontent, the protest against the fascization attempts of Batista, who is trying once more to postpone the Constituent Assembly.

In this article we shall present the main characteristics and factors of the Cuban situation, and the causes leading to the present developments. This will help the Communists of North America and all lovers of democracy, all enemies of fascism, to mobilize wide support for the people of Cuba.

THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT HAS RECOVERED

The Cuban revolutionary movement, which suffered a great setback in March, 1935, and which was subjected to absolute illegality, to the most brutal repression, is today reorganizing its forces and improving its tactics, and is growing rapidly.

The police repression following the

* Menocal's Republican Democratic Party is a split-off group composed of the majority of the old National Democratic Group, which was also headed by Menocal.—*Ed.*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

March events—when many of the best leaders of the revolutionary movement were murdered or jailed—illegalized the trade unions, the National Federation of Labor of Cuba, and the revolutionary parties, and banned all demonstrations of protest. Despite this repression, organizational and propaganda work among the masses continued; and, within the framework of the reactionary laws and whatever social legislation exists, and with the help of the Communist Party, the trade unions have been reorganized.

In the elections of January, 1936, the revolutionary masses were mobilized around certain candidates, and were influential in electing to office many local officials. Very broad committees were organized, demanding the calling of a Constituent Assembly, democratically elected and with full power to decide all constitutional questions. This demand has become the main slogan of all the popular democratic movements of Cuba. In the same way a campaign was organized in favor of social and political amnesty throughout the Island, which succeeded in enrolling people from all social sections.

Through the most varied means, the revolutionary organizations kept in close contact with the masses, organizing and mobilizing them in support of the unity of the revolutionary movement, for the unity of democratic action *of all the Cuban people.*

The Communist Party conducted a struggle against the putschist tendencies prevailing within some of the large revolutionary parties, like the Cuban Revolutionary Party (Authentic) and Young Cuba, which were a great obstacle to the growth of the movement. The Communist Party was an important factor in reorganizing the revolutionary movement.

A great change in the alignment of both the revolutionary forces and those of reaction came about shortly after the ousting of Dr. Gomez by the military-constitutionary coup d'etat organized by Batista with the help of the congressional majority. Batista had counted upon the cooperation of the four legal parties in December, 1936: Republican Action (of Gomez), National Democratic Group (of Gen. Menocal), Nationalist Union (of Col. Mendietta), and the Liberal Party (Machado's). The ousting of Gomez, however, forced the Republican Action Party into open and direct opposition to Batista and divided the Liberals into followers of Batista and oppositionists. The same thing occurred in the National Democratic Group which in the beginning had assumed a position of opposition to Batista.

These developments made possible the organization of the Parliamentary Democratic Front—an opposition bloc in the House of Representatives.

The university, high schools, and other institutions of learning, which had been closed since March, 1935, were opened under a law enacted by Congress. This event was utilized as a means of reorganizing the masses of the students, who in a few months again became a very important anti-reactionary factor.

In February, two months after Gomez had been ousted, the Cuban Revolutionary Party was granted legality, and it immediately proceeded to reorganize its ranks, while the work for the unity of the revolution crystal-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lized into the Popular Revolutionary Bloc established in July with the following parties participating: Authentic Organization (split from the Authentics of Dr. Grau); National Agrarian Party (Dr. Vergara); and Revolutionary Union. Today the Bloc also includes the Authentic Left and Cardenas Forward.

The trade union movement showed a united front in every important city on May First, advancing, in addition to their own economic demands, demands for the freedom of all social and political prisoners, for the guarantee of popular democratic rights, and the convening of a Constituent Assembly. This united front resulted in the Committee for Labor Unity, which is struggling to bring about a convention that will unite all the workers in one big national trade union organization.

Several opposition daily newspapers began publication: *Luz* of Dr. Grau, which later changed its name to *Patria; La Prenza* of Dr. Gomez; and the popular weekly *Mediodia,* which has not only increased its circulation rapidly, but has played an important role in crystallizing the unity of the revolutionary movement.

Another most important factor in the development of the present Cuban situation has been the powerful movement of the youth for unity, led by the Brotherhood of Cuban Youth, an organization with a broad popular base. This organization is educating the youth in the spirit of democracy and for national liberation. It has succeeded in mobilizing all the militant youth of Cuba, who are a guarantee for the future of Cuba.

Still another important factor has been the influence of the war in Spain and in China. The movement in support of the democratic government of Spain, despite all difficulties, has rallied the masses and has proved most valuable in gaining support for the Popular Front movement of Cuba.

As a consequence of these developments, Batista has been obliged to retreat, though he has made many attempts to strike deadly blows at the revolutionary democratic movement. On several occasions there were threats that Congress would be dissolved, threats of illegalization of the progressive parties, and of direct control of the government by Batista.

To counteract the revolutionary propaganda, and to throttle the people's demand for a Constituent Assembly, Batista launched the slogan of a "three-year plan," demagogically presenting it as a program which would immediately benefit the people and lead to the independence of Cuba, within the next three years, during which time a Constituent Assembly was not to be called.

In reality, the three-year plan is a long list of economic problems, vaguely formulated, and in those few instances where it deals with concrete matters it favors the exploiters of the Cuban people. The real objective of the three-year plan is to give Batista a demagogic base in furthering his attempts to establish a corporate fascist regime in Cuba.

Batista has not succeeded in bringing the people closer to himself, because of the violent contrast between his propaganda about social justice and of the increasing oppression on the part of imperialist corporations,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

such as the Havana Electric, the Standard Oil, and the sugar corporations; between his demagogy about national economic betterment and the increasing signs of the coming economic crisis in Cuba; between his propaganda about democracy and his open cooperation with the representatives of Italian and German fascism and his support of Franco.

The following instances are but a few that illustrate the retreat of Batista and the reactionary forces. Batista found it necessary to state recently in a speech at Pinar del Rio, regarding the Home for Peasant Children, that this was not a fascist movement, "that it was not balillas nor pioneers." And more recently at the La Tropical Stadium, in support of the three-year plan, he stated that "this plan is not fascist, nor is it Communist, but Nationalist-Cuban." Another characteristic feature of the situation is to be found in more direct opposition to Batista. Until now those who wished to mention Batista in the press, on the radio, or in public, had to speak of "the determining reality" or use some other similar phrase; now they call him by his name.

The reactionary forces are attempting by increasing provocations to force premature actions of the revolutionary movement in order to crush it before it becomes sufficiently powerful. Dr. Mendez Penate, Vice-President of Dr. Grau's party, was forced to drink castor-oil by two policemen. The hall of the Spanish Republic Left was raided by a dozen policemen in civilian clothes and the furniture was wrecked. The Committee for Labor Unity and the Brotherhood of Cuban Youth Congress were forbidden to meet.

THE NEW SITUATION

Three very important events characterize the new situation in Cuba. First, an event of extraordinary importance, because it is the first step toward democratic *unified action* of all the Cuban people—the establishment of the Democratic Front or the Conference of Political Groups, composed of Republican Action, Republican Democrats, and the Popular Revolutionary Bloc. These parties, as is stated in their first joint manifesto, "have different programs, but *are united in a front of common struggle* for democracy." The Democratic Front enjoys the sympathy of the Authentic masses of Dr. Grau; many progressive committees of this party have expressed their willingness to join the Democratic Front but have been prevented until now by the reactionary wing of the party. The formation of the Conference clearly shows the possibility of unified action which will include, not only the genuinely revolutionary parties, but also all the democratic parties of Cuba. The Conference of Political Groups "invites and expects the affiliation of all groups interested in the achievement of liberty and democracy."

The second event is the failure of all attempts to mobilize mass support for the three-year plan and the so-called Labor Congress, held in November. Batista had hoped to prove that the people were with him, he had hoped that, as a result, he would be able to dissolve the Congress of the Republic and establish a fascist regime. He had counted on the support of a section of the leadership of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, hav-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing promised that a provisional government would be formed in which that party would have an apparent majority, but with control in the hands of Batista.

But he failed in all these objectives.

The mobilization took place, but only with the most ruthless coercion on the part of the Department of Labor and the military officers against all employees and workers. Lists containing the names of the workers in the most important factories were checked; the whole press and the radio broadcasting stations were forced to announce these two events daily.

Free tickets and a dollar were given to all those attending. For the so-called Labor Congress a special mobilization call was issued to the trade unions; special delegates were sent into the interior and meetings of the Committee for Labor Unity were forbidden. The Labor Department threatened the trade union leaders with the dissolution of their organizations unless they participated in this so-called Labor Congress.

But the Communist Party, together with the principal revolutionary organizations and many important labor trade unions boycotted these pro-fascist and reactionary acts. The trade unions decided by a majority vote not to participate. Some of the trade unions which did send delegates, because they feared dissolution, put forward economic demands of the Committee for Labor Unity. From the province of Havana only the railroad brotherhoods, longshoremen, and employees of electric power plants participated in the "Labor Congress." From Santiago de Cuba only the waterfront trade unions were represented.

But the final failure of the so-called Congress occurred when Juan Arevalo, a friend of the discredited Machado, spoke at the Congress while other delegates were denied the floor. The majority of the genuine representatives of the trade unions withdrew and registered their protest through the press.

The mass mobilization also proved an abysmal failure. In spite of the elaborate preparations, about 30,000 persons attended, and the majority of them left the hall before the meeting ended. When Batista spoke, there were only about 7,000 present. These failures to rally support and the fact that two days previously the Cuban Revolutionary Party had issued a statement against a provisional government, wrecked Batista's plans. The gathering was even more stirred against Batista when Aurelio Alvarez, President of the Association of Cuban Sugan-Cane Growers (colonos), who spoke in favor of the three-year plan, and who is considered a friend of Batista, stated:

> "Is Col. Batista alone responsible for the situation existing in the country? He is, and in a very high degree, and I as a Cuban appeal to his conscience. . . . What is happening now? At this moment, while we are here gathered to speak about the three-year plan, an initiative which I applaud, while apparently there is great enthusiasm in many hearts, and we speak daily about the great welfare that this plan will bring to the people, the country continues to suffer great tragedy and lives ashamed of the politics which it is forced to accept."

These words caused a tremendous sensation in the whole country and a profound disgust with Batista and

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his followers, who prevented their publication for several days.

The third event of major importance is the great popular demonstration of November 27, in which more than 100,000 persons participated, to commemorate the martyrdom in 1871 of eight Cuban students at the hands of the volunteer corps of the Spanish government.

The Spanish organizations in Cuba are demanding immediate amnesty for political and social prisoners. They are also requesting the government of the Spanish Republic to reconsider the trial of those eight students and to reverse the judgment upon them in order to rehabilitate their memory.*

It is in this situation, characterized by these three events which show the growing vitality of the revolutionary movement and the profound discontent of the people, that the decision not to participate in the elections was made.

THE LAST MANEUVER AGAINST THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

The Cuban revolutionary movement has had as its central demand during the recent period the calling of a Constituent Assembly, which would represent the deeply felt needs of the people for liberty and progress.

Batista's chief aim has been to thwart the desires of the people, to prevent the elections for a Constituent Assembly. Congress, the majority of which is controlled by Batista, has refused many times to call such an election and has even tried to bring about its own dissolution. This explains its stubborn refusal to draw lots, as provided in the present Constitution, for the renewal of half the Congress for 1938.

The Revolutionary Union Party, realizing that Batista would be in a position to dissolve Congress legally if lots were not drawn, appealed the decree on the basis of its unconstitutionality. The Supreme Court, however, handed down its decision too late for the elections to be held. In view of the danger that this decision might be used as a pretext to postpone the Constituent Assembly, the revolutionary parties, particularly the Popular Revolutionary Bloc and the Revolutionary Union, demanded an early meeting of representatives of the various opposition parties to consider the situation.

It was from that joint meeting, during which the Cuban Revolutionary Party withdrew, that the manifesto was issued, announcing the establishment of the Democratic Front, with the following program:

1. Against partial elections in March, 1938.
2. For the election of a Constituent Assembly with full power to decide all constitutional matters.
3. For the election of delegates to the Constituent Assembly in accordance with the aspirations of the people and the requirements of the present Constitution; to be held simultaneously with the election of Representatives to the House.

The program contains a number of further demands relating to the conduct of elections to the constitutional

* Since this was written the Cuban government cabled that it will carry out this request of the Cuban people.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rights of citizens, and to amnesty for political and social prisoners.*

The Cuban Revolutionary Party agreed to consider those points in the program regarding the Constituent Assembly and partial elections, but rejected the plank for simultaneous elections.

Batista was determined to hold the partial elections in any event. The House of Representatives finally passed the so-called Code of Electoral Emergency, a reactionary, anti-Cuban measure. The Senate approved the Code, despite the stubborn resistance of the Opposition in both Houses and the sentiment of the people.

This Electoral Law demands the presentation of 18,000 signatures, each one notarized, within fifteen days, to legalize any party. It establishes a series of measures tending to block the exercise of suffrage.

On December 3 the Democratic Front officially declared:

"In view of the promulgation of the so-called Emergency Election Law, which confirms apprehensions already made public, that such a procedure is at variance with the interests of the country and with the most elementary democratic principles, the organizations present publicly ratify their abstention, denying their aid, and recommending to the public non-participation in the elections as a civic protest."

The Communist Party opposed the Electoral Law from the first, mobilizing the people against it and supporting the position of the parliamentary minority. At the same time the Party explained to the revolutionary parties and their leaderships the need for maintaining in general a positive attitude toward the election. However, since the passage of the Code, which introduced a new situation, the Communist Party adopted the boycott postion and has recommended that position to the other revolutionary parties—not losing sight of the peculiarities of the Cuban situation and placing as the central task the maintenance of revolutionary unity and joint action with the democratic parties.

If our Party had adopted a tactic of participation, it is almost certain that two other parties would have adopted the same tactic. But, what would have been the result?

Such a tactic would have broken the People's Revolutionary Bloc, and the other parties would not have been sufficiently strong to resist Grau's call for dissolution. Likewise, the Democratic Front would have been broken, since Menocal's party would not have participated in any way.

Further, the opportunity of obtaining some positions in the Chamber is very distant, considering the limitations of election legislation and the little time available.

Non-participation in the election is, on the other hand, a slogan rooted in the Cuban masses, who have on several occasions in the history of Cuba carried through such a procedure.

It was in consideration of the fact that the principal task of the Communist Party is to maintain and broaden the movement for revolutionary and democratic unity that the Communist Party took this position. The Democratic Front has enormous possibilities of succeeding, not only as regards the elections to be held in March, but also as regards achieving

* Since the writing of this article, amnesty for political and social prisoners has been granted.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the adoption of the program for the solution of the present Cuban situation.

The situation today differs fundamentally from that preceding the January election in the following particulars:

1. In the pre-January period, we were weighed down by all the consequences of the March rout. The revolutionary parties were disorganized, dispersed, with many leaders in exile maintaining a putschist policy. Now we have a totally different picture.

2. In January all the democratic parties, including those of Gomez and Menocal, participated in the elections. Now these groups are not participating.

3. In January there were not even the smallest beginnings of unity, while today there exist the People's Revolutionary Bloc and the Democratic Front, with good possibilities for attracting Grau's Cuban Revolutionary Party.

4. The January elections were general, including those for President of the Republic, municipal mayors, and all the legislative bodies, national and local, while now there is to be only the election of eighty-one representatives. Even in the eventuality of electing no representatives in this election, the democratic opposition counts on twenty-four representatives in the Chamber belonging to the Republican Action and Democratic Republican Parties.

Our Party, in determining its position, is fully aware of its enormous responsibilities. We realize that, despite its still insufficient organizing strength, it is today a prime political factor in our national life. It fought for the abandonment of putschist tactics with the result that practically all political parties have abandoned propaganda for adventurous expeditions and terrorist acts. It posed the fact that the central slogan of the revolutionary movement should be the struggle for a democratic and sovereign Constituent Assembly, and such is today the demand of the whole Cuban people. Our Party fought tirelessly for the formation of a Democratic Front; today this Front is on the road to complete formation. Our Party proved exceedingly influential as regards the latest position of the Cuban Revolutionary Party and the collective repudiation of the provisional government which Batista had proposed. Today Batista finds himself on the road to complete isolation.

By this position of our Party in the political life of Cuba despite its illegality, we can today understand the enormous responsibility of our decision.

ATTITUDE AND ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR

In conclusion, a few words should be said about the United States Embassy. This is especially necessary because of the influence that Yankee financial interests and the American Government exert in our country. The whole world knows that the principal exploitation suffered by our people today is that of the companies and banks which control the production of Cuban sugar, the greater part of the railroads, mines, electric plants, etc., and which control nearly 80 per cent of the cultivable land of Cuba. These finance-capital interests depend

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

upon Batista today for support in their super-exploitation of the Cuban people. But the United States Embassy, representing the democratic administration of Roosevelt, cannot be confused with these interests.

The Embassy, while Caffery was Ambassador, directly supported Batista, until the removal of President Gomez from office. At that time, Batista's coup d'etat took place with Caffery's express public consent.

Since that event, the Embassy's attitude has varied, especially in view of Batista's flirtations with England, Japan, Germany, and Italy. But the attitude of the Embassy has continued a certain measure of friendship to Batista, attempting to isolate him from the fascist powers, which are enemies of the United States, while leaving him a free hand in the brutal oppression of the Cuban people. But it appears that the latest events have evidenced to the United States Government that Batista's policy is producing the opposite effect to that intended and does not correspond to the real interests of the Roosevelt administration. If the Cuban democratic movement and the democratic movement of the United States can, by united effort, bring about the withdrawal on the part of the United States Embassy of all support from Batista, a great battle in favor of the liberty of our people and of better collaboration between our countries, on the basis of genuine "Good Neighbor" policy, will have been won.

SOME PERSPECTIVES

Batista is faced with a difficult situation. In order to maintain the present budget he must secure loans. But, menaced by a growing opposition movement, it is becoming more and more difficult for him to secure credit from American bankers. He can do only one of two things: strike a decisive blow, as Vargas did in Brazil, which would prove difficult under present conditions in Cuba, and in view of the contradictions existing in the high command of the army, or yield to the demands of the opposition for democratic procedure and a Constituent Assembly.

The outcome depends on the ability of the revolutionary organizations to direct the revolutionary movement, in maintaining a position of ardent defense of legality and by every measure avoiding provocation.

But much depends on the capacity of the revolutionary organizations to transform the slogan of non-participation into an active and militant slogan of the people against the reactionary plans for an election in March.

The solidarity of the Communist Party of the United States, which has so splendidly aided the Cuban people in the past, and the support of the whole progressive and democratic people of the United States will be of great mutual value to the peoples of Cuba and of the United States in defeating any attempts to bring about a fascist coup in Cuba.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE BAKUNINISTS AT WORK

A MEMORANDUM ON THE SPANISH UPRISING IN THE SUMMER OF 1873

BY FREDERICK ENGELS

[*We are glad to present to our readers the profound and penetrating work of Frederick Engels, which appears here for the first time in an English translation, evaluating the Bakuninist variety of anarchism in action in Spain over sixty years ago. This document is especially valuable at this time, since it offers a historical sidelight on the role of the Anarchists in the present epic struggle in Spain. This work was first published under the above title in three issues of the* Volksstaat *during the months of October and November, 1873. For its translation and annotation we are indebted to Comrade Len Toulon—The Editors.*]

INTRODUCTION (TO THE 1894 REPRINT)

A FEW chronological facts may serve to make the following memorandum easier to understand.

On February 9, 1873, King Amadeo* was fed up with his Spanish Kingdom; the first king to go on strike, he abdicated. The republic was proclaimed on February 12; a new Carlist** uprising broke out soon after in the Basque provinces.

On April 10 a Constituent Assembly was elected, which met at the beginning of June and proclaimed the federative republic on June 8. On June 11 a new Cabinet was constituted under Pi y Margall.* At the same time a commission was elected to draft the new constitution, though the extreme Republicans, the so-called Intransigents, were excluded from it. When this new constitution was proclaimed on June 3, the Intransigents found it did not go far enough for them in splitting Spain up into "independent cantons." The Intransigents immediately rebelled in the provinces; in Seville, Cordoba, Granada, Malaga, Cadiz, Alcoy, Murcia, Cartagena, Vanecia, etc.; they were everywhere victorious from July 5 to July 11, establishing an independent cantonal government in each of these cities. On July 18 Pi y Margall resigned, being replaced by Salmeron,** who ordered troops to march against the rebels at once. The

* Don Amadeo (or Amadeus) of Savoy, second son of King Victor Emmanuel II of Italy, was elected King of Spain by the Cortes in 1870, and abdicated in 1873.

** The Carlists were the reactionary clerical-monarchist supporters of Don Carlos' claim to the throne of Spain.

* Pi y Margall was a moderate Socialist and one of the leaders of the Republicans; he was the second President of the Spanish Republic, from June 11 to July 18, 1873.

** Nicolas Salmeron y Alfonso (1838-1908), bourgeois Spanish politician. A moderate Republican, he was the third President of the Spanish Republic, from July 18 to September 7, 1873.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rebels were defeated in a few days after slight resistance; on July 26 the government's rule was reestablished throughout Andalusia through the fall of Cadiz, while Murcia and Valencia were conquered about the same time. Only Valencia fought with a certain degree of resoluteness.

Cartagena was the only city to hold out. This city, the biggest naval base in Spain, which had fallen into the rebels' hands together with the fleet, possessed thirteen detached forts on the land side, in addition to the walled fortifications, and hence was not easy to capture. And as the government took care not to destroy its own naval base, the "sovereign canton of Cartagena" continued to exist until January 11, 1874, when it finally capitulated, because it was actually no longer good for anything else.

In this whole disgraceful insurrection we are interested here only in the even more disgraceful acts of the Bakuninist Anarchists; only these acts are set forth at length here as a warning example for the rest of the world.

THE MEMORANDUM (1873)

I

The report of the Hague Congress Commission* on Bakunin's secret Alliance* has shown the labor world the secret doings, the villainies, and the empty tinkling phrases by means of which the proletarian movement was to be made to serve the inflated ambition and the egoistic aims of a few misunderstood geniuses. In the meantime these would-be great men have given us an opportunity in Spain to become acquainted with their practical revolutionary activity too. Let us examine how they put into practice their ultra-revolutionary phrases of anarchy and self-rule, the abolition of all authority, especially that of the state, and the immediate and complete emancipation of the workers. At last we are in a position to do so, since we now have the report sent to the Geneva Congress** by the New Madrid Federation*** of the International, in addition to the newspaper reports on the events in Spain.

We know that the members of the secret Alliance retained the upper hand in Spain when the International was split; a large majority of the Spanish workers followed their lead. When the republic was proclaimed in February, 1873, the Spanish Alliancists were placed in a very difficult position. Spain is a country that is very backward in industrial develop-

* The fifth Congress of the International Workingmen's Association (the First International) was held at The Hague in September, 1872. The principal question before the Hague Congress was the split in the International plotted by Michael Bakunin, the leader of the Anarchists, and his followers. The Congress elected an inquiry commission, with Marx, Engels, and leading Bakuninists among its members, to investigate the secret society founded by Bakunin within the International.

* *L'Alliance de la Democratic Socialiste* (The Alliance of Socialist Democracy) was the name of Bakunin's secret organization. The findings of the inquiry commission were embodied in the pamphlet *L'Alliance de la Democratie Socialiste et l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs*, written by Engels and Paul Lafargue with Marx's collaboration and published in London by the International in 1873.

** The Geneva Congress, held in September, 1873, was the sixth and last international congress of the First International.

*** The New Madrid Federation was the organization of loyal adherents of the International in Madrid.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment, so that one cannot even speak of an immediate emancipation of the working class there. Before things reach that stage Spain must pass through several stages of development and clear away a number of obstacles in its path. The republic offered the opportunity for concentrating these preliminary stages into the shortest possible period of time and eliminating these obstacles rapidly. But this opportunity could be utilized only through the active political intervention of the Spanish working class. The masses of workers felt this; they insisted everywhere that they participate in events and utilize the opportunity for action instead of leaving the field open to the possessing classes for their action and their intrigues, as in the past. The government set the elections for the Constituent Cortes; what was to be the attitude of the International? The Bakuninist chiefs were greatly embarrassed. Continued political inactivity appeared more ridiculous and impossible with every day; the workers wanted to "see action." On the other hand, the Alliancists had preached for years past that one could not take part in any revolution that did not have as its goal the immediate emancipation of the working class, that the taking of any political action comprises the recognition of the state, this principle of evil, and that therefore participation in any election was a particularly mortal crime. How they got out of this dilemma is shown by the Madrid report mentioned above:

"The same persons who rejected the Hague resolution on the political attitude of the working class, trampling the Statutes of the Association under foot, and thus introducing dissension, struggle, and disorder into the Spanish section of the International; the same persons who had the impudence to portray us in the eyes of the workers as ambitious place-hunters that want to conquer power for themselves under the pretext of placing the working class in power; the same persons who call themselves autonomous, Anarchist revolutionaries, and the like, eagerly seized this opportunity to engage in politics, but in the worst sort of politics: bourgeois politics. They did not work to obtain political power for the working class —on the contrary, they detest this idea—but to assist a fragment of the bourgeoisie to take the helm, a fragment consisting of adventurers, men of ambition, and place-hunters, who call themselves Intransigent (irreconcilable) Republicans.

"On the eve of the general elections for the Constituent Cortes, the workers of Barcelona, Alcoy, and other cities demanded to know what policy the workers were to follow, both in the parliamentary struggle and in every other. Two big meetings were held for this purpose, one in Barcelona and the other in Alcoy. In both of them the Alliancists made every effort to prevent them from fixing the political line of the International (their International, be it noted). Hence, it was decided that the International as an association has to engage in no political activity at all, but that the members of the International, each for himself, could act as they pleased and join any party they liked, by virtue of their famous self-rule! And what was the result of the application of so absurd a doctrine? The bulk of the members of the International, including the Anarchists, took part in the elections, without a program, without a banner, and without candidates of their own, and thus contributed to the fact that bourgeois Republicans were elected almost without exception. Only two or three workers were elected to the Chamber, persons who represented absolutely nothing at all, who had not raised their voices a single time in defense of the interests of our class, and who voted good-naturedly for all the reactionary proposals submitted by the majority."

That is what comes of the Bakuninist "abstention from politics." In

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

peaceful times, when the proletariat knows in advance that it will elect only a few representatives to Parliament at most, and that it is wholly deprived of the possibility of obtaining a parliamentary majority, it may be possible, here and there, to make the workers believe that it is a great revolutionary deed to remain at home during elections, and to attack the state as such, the state in general, which exists nowhere and thus cannot defend itself, instead of attacking the state in which we live and which oppresses us. For this is a splendid way of acting like a revolutionary for people whose hearts easily fall into their boots; and how much the leaders of the Spanish Alliancists belong to this breed is proved in detail by the pamphlet on the Alliance mentioned above.

But as soon as events themselves force the proletariat to the fore, abstention becomes a tangible absurdity, and the active intervention of the working class an imperative necessity. And this was the case in Spain. Amadeo's abdication had forced the radical monarchists out of power and out of the opportunity of getting back to power so soon; the Alphonsists* were still more impossible for the time being; the Carlists preferred, as they nearly always did, civil war to the election campaign. All these parties abstained according to the Spanish custom; only the federal Republicans, split into two wings, and the masses of workers took part in the elections.

In view of the tremendous magic that the name of the International still exerted upon the Spanish workers, and in view of the excellent organization still existing at the time, at least in practice—of its Spanish branch—it was certain that any candidacy put up and supported by the International would have won magnificently in the Catalonian factory areas, in Valencia, in the cities of Andalusia, etc., and that a minority would have entered the Cortes, strong enough to turn the scales between the two wings of the Republicans in any vote. The workers felt this, they felt that now the time was come to set their organization, still powerful at that time, in motion. But Messrs. the leaders of the Bakuninist school had preached the gospel of unconditional abstention for so long that they could not about-face at once, and so they invented that pitiful way out: having the International abstain as a whole, but letting its members as individuals vote as they like. The result of this declaration of political bankruptcy was that the workers, as always in such a case, voted for the people who talked most radical—for the Intransigents—and hence felt themselves more or less responsible for the subsequent acts of those they had elected, and were more or less involved in them.

II

It was impossible for the Alliancists to remain in the ridiculous position in which they had been placed by their clever election policy else their past domination of the Spanish International was at an end. They had to make a show, at least, of action. What was to rescue them was—the general strike.

* The Alphonsists were the monarchist supporters of the claim of Don Alfonso (later Alfonso XII) to the Spanish throne.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the Bakuninist program the general strike is the lever that is applied to start the social revolution. One fine morning all the workers in all the trades of a country or of the whole world stop work and thus force the possessing classes in four weeks at most, either to give in or to attack the workers, so that the latter then have the right of defending themselves and overthrowing the whole of the old society on the occasion. The proposal is far from new; the French Socialists, and after them the Belgians, have ridden this hobbyhorse, which is of British breed originally, ever since 1848. During the rapid and violent development of Chartism among the British workers following the crisis of 1837 the "sacred month" had been preached as early as 1839 (cf. Engels *The Condition of the Working Class in England,* second German edition, p. 234—*Ed.),* and had met with such approval that the factory workers of North England tried to put it into effect in July, 1842. The general strike also played a big role at the Geneva Congress of the Alliancists of September 1, 1873; but it was universally admitted that it required a complete organization of the working class and a full treasury. And there's the rub. First, the governments will let neither the organization nor the treasury of the workers get so far, especially if we encourage them through political abstention; and, second, political events and the excesses of the ruling classes will bring about the emancipation of the workers long before the proletariat succeeds in obtaining this ideal organization and this colossal reserve fund. If it had them, moreover, it would not need the roundabout way of the general strike to reach its goal.

For anyone who knows the secret doings of the Alliance to any degree, there can be no doubt that the proposal for the employment of this well-tried measure emanated from the Swiss center. Be that as it may, the Spanish leaders found this a way out, a way of doing something without becoming directly "political," and gladly accepted it. The marvelous effects of the general strike were preached everywhere; they prepared to make a start in Barcelona and Alcoy.

In the meanwhile political conditions approached closer and closer to a crisis. The old braggarts of the federal Republicans, Castelar and Co.,* were terrified by the movement which was growing too big for them; they had to turn the reins over to Pi y Margall, who tried to reach a compromise with the Intransigents. Among the republicans Pi was the only Socialist, the only one who realized the necessity of basing the republic on the workers. He immediately submitted a program of measures of a social nature to be executed forthwith, which were not merely of direct advantage to the workers, but through their after-effects would give the impetus for further steps and thus would have to set social reform in motion at least. But the Bakuninist members of the International, who are obliged to reject even the most revolutionary measure as soon as it proceeds from the "state," supported

* Emilio Castelar y Ripoll (1832-1899), bourgeois Spanish politician. He was the fourth President of the Spanish Republic, from September 7, 1873, to January 2, 1874.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the craziest swindler among the Intransigents rather than a cabinet minister. Pi's negotiations with the Intransigents were drawn out; the Intransigents became impatient; the hottest heads among them began to stage the cantonal uprising in Andalusia. Now the leaders of the Alliance had to strike too, unless they wanted to be trailing along behind the intransigent bourgeoisie. So the general strike was ordered.

In Barcelona a poster was issued, among others, saying:

"Workers! We are calling a general strike to express the profound abhorrence we feel at seeing the government use the army to fight our brother workers but neglect the war against the Carlists. . . ."

The workers of Barcelona, the biggest factory city in Spain, whose history records more barricade battles than that of any other city in the world, were thus summoned, not to oppose the armed force of the government with arms in their own hands, but—with a general stoppage of work, with a measure that directly affects only the individual bourgeois, but not their general representative, the state power! In the inactive time of peace the Barcelona workers had been able to hear the violent phrases of such tame persons as Alerini, Farga-Pellicer, and Vinas;* when it came to action, when Alerini, Farga, and Vinas first issued their famous election program and then kept on pacifying the workers, and, finally, when they proclaimed the general strike instead of issuing the call to arms, they became really contemptible in the eyes of the workers. The weakest Intransigent still displayed more energy than the strongest Alliancist. The Alliance and the International led by it lost all their influence, and when the general strike was proclaimed by these gentlemen on the pretext of paralyzing the government, the workers simply laughed in their faces. But the activity of the bogus International had accomplished this at least: keeping Barcelona from participating in the cantonal uprising; and Barcelona was the only city whose joining in the movement could have given a powerful backing to the worker element strongly represented in it everywhere, and thus could have offered it the prospect of finally getting control of the whole movement. And what is more, with Barcelona's joining, the victory was as good as won. But Barcelona did not lift a finger; the Barcelona workers, under no illusions as to the Intransigents and deceived by the Alliancists, remained inactive, thus ensuring the final victory of the Madrid government. All of which did not prevent the Alliancists Alerini and Brousse* (details regarding them are set forth in the report on the Alliance) from stating in their paper *Solidarite Revolutionnaire:*

"The revolutionary movement is spreading like wildfire all over the peninsula. . . . Nothing has happened in Barcelona, but the

* Charles Alerini, Rafael Farga-Pellicer, and Vinas were prominent leaders of the Spanish Anarchists. They took an active part in the Bakuninist fight against Marxism in the First International.

* Paul Brousse (1854-1912), petty-bourgeois French Socialist. He joined the Anarchist movement in Switzerland after the fall of the Paris Commune; he was one of the Anarchist leaders in Spain in 1873, and later became the leader of the Possibilist (reformist) wing of the French Socialist movement.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

revolution is permanent on the public squares!"

But it was the revolution of the Alliancists, which consists of speechifying and for that very reason is "permanently" rooted to one spot.

The general strike had been called at the same time in Alcoy. Alcoy is a factory town of recent date with perhaps 30,000 inhabitants by now, in which the International, in Bakuninist form, had won a foothold only a year ago and had spread very rapidly. Socialism in any form was welcomed by these workers, hitherto untouched by the movement, just as repeatedly happens in backward towns here and there in Germany, where the General Association of German Workers suddenly acquires a large momentary following. Hence, Alcoy was selected as the seat of the Bakuninist Federal Commission for Spain, and it is this very Federal Commission that we shall observe at work here.

On July 7 a workers' meeting voted the general strike and on the following day it sent a deputation to the alcalde (mayor) with the demand that the manufacturers be called together within twenty-four hours and handed the workers' demands. The alcalde Albors, a bourgeois Republican, put the workers off, summoned troops from Alicante, and counseled the manufacturers not to yield, but to barricade themselves in their houses. He promised to be at his post himself. After having had a conference with the manufacturers—we are quoting the official report of the Alliancist Federal Commission, dated July 14, 1873—though he had promised the workers neutrality at the outset, he issued a proclamation in which he "insults and slanders the workers, takes the side of the manufacturers, and thus destroys the liberty of the strikers and challenges them to battle."

How the pious wishes of a mayor can destroy the strikers' rights and liberty is in any event unclear. However this may be, the workers led by the Alliance informed the Town Council through a committee that if it intended to maintain its promised neutrality in the strike it would be better for it to abdicate to avoid a conflict. The committee was shown the door, and when it left the Town Hall policemen fired on the crowd that was standing peacefully and unarmed on the square. This was the beginning of the struggle, according to the Alliance report. The populace armed itself and the fighting, which is supposed to have lasted "twenty hours," began. On one side the workers, who totaled 5,000, according to the *Solidarite Revolutionnaire,* and on the other thirty-two gendarmes in the Town Hall, plus a few armed men in four or five houses on the marketplace, which were burned by the populace in good old Prussian fashion. The gendarmes ran out of ammunition finally and they had to surrender. "There would have been fewer casualties," the Alliancist Commission report states, "if the alcalde Albors had not deceived the populace by pretending to surrender and then in cowardly fashion ordering the murder of those who, relying on his word, forced their way into the Town Hall; and this same alcalde would not have been killed by the righteously indignant populace if he had not fired his revolver point blank at the men

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

who were placing him under arrest."

And what were the victims of this struggle?

"Though we cannot give an exact figure for those killed and wounded (on the side of the populace), we can say that they total no less than—ten. There are no less than fifteen dead and wounded on the side of the challengers."

This was the first street battle of the Alliance. For twenty hours they fought, 5,000 strong, against thirty-two gendarmes and a few armed bourgeois, vanquished them after the latter's ammunition had run out, and lost a total of ten men. The Alliance doubtless does well to drum Falstaff's motto into its initiates, that "discretion is the better part of valor."

Needless to say, all the atrocity stories of the bourgeois papers concerning unnecessarily burned down factories, gendarmes shot down en masse, human beings drenched with kerosene, and set afire, are sheer inventions. The victorious workers, even when they are led by the Alliancists, whose motto is: "Everything must be smashed in free and easy fashion," are far too magnanimous toward their vanquished enemies, and hence the latter attribute to them all the atrocities which they themselves never fail to commit in the event of victory.

So the victory was won. "In Alcoy," the *Solidarite Revolutionnaire* rejoices, "our friends, 5,000 strong, have become masters of the situation." And what did the "masters" do with their "situation"?

Here the Alliancist report and the Alliancist paper leave us completely in the lurch; we must depend on the ordinary newspaper reports. From these we learn that a "Committee of Public Safety," that is, a revolutionary government, was thereupon established in Alcoy. Now the Alliancists had decided at their congress in St. Imier, Switzerland, on September 15, 1872, "that every organization of political, so-called provisional, or revolutionary power can only be a new deception and would be just as dangerous for the proletariat as all existing governments." Moreover, the members of the Spanish Federal Commission located in Alcoy had done their best to have the Congress of the Spanish International adopt this resolution. None the less we find that Severino Albarracin, member of this commission, and according to some reports Francisco Tomas,* its secretary, were members of this provisional and revolutionary government, the Alcoy Committee of Public Safety!

And what did this Committee of Public Safety do? What were its measures to accomplish "the immediate, complete emancipation of the workers"? It forbade all men to leave the town, while women were allowed to do so provided they—had passports! The opponents of authority introduce passports again! As for the rest: absolute perplexity, inactivity, and helplessness.

In the meantime General Velarde advanced with troops from Alicante. The government had every reason to settle the local uprisings in the provinces quietly. And the "masters of the situation" in Alcoy had every reason

* Severino Albarracin and Francisco Tomas were prominent Spanish Anarchists, followers of Bakunin in his fight against Marxism in the First International.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to withdraw from a situation which they were unable to handle. Thus, Deputy Cervera, who acted as go-between, had an easy job. The Committee of Public Safety abdicated, the troops entered on July 12 without resistance, and the only promise made the Committee of Public Safety in return was—general amnesty. Once again the Alliancist "masters of the situation" were out of the dilemma. And that was the end of the Alcoy adventure.

In San Lucar de Barrameda near Cadiz, the Alliancist report tells us:

". . . the alcalde closes the meetingplace of the International and challenges the indignation of the workers by his threats and his unceasing attacks upon the personal rights of the citizens. A committee demands from the minister the recognition of the law and the reopening of the arbitrarily closed meeting place. M. Pi grants this in principle . . . but refuses it in actuality; the workers find that the government plans to outlaw their association; they depose the local authorities and appoint others in their stead, who open the association's meeting place again."

"The populace dominates the situation . . . in San Lucar!" the *Solidarite Revolutionnaire* announces triumphantly. The Alliancists who had formed a revolutionary government here too, altogether contrary to their Anarchist principles, did not know what to do with their rule. They lost time with empty debates and paper resolutions, and after General Pavia had taken Seville and Cadiz, he sent a few companies of the Soria brigade to San Lucar on August 5 and met with—no resistance.

These are the heroic deeds of the Alliance where it took the stage without any competition.

III

Immediately after the street fighting in Alcoy the Intransigents arose in Andalusia. Pi y Margall was still at the helm and in constant negotiations with the leaders of this party to form a cabinet with them; why start the attack then before the negotiations had failed? The reason for this haste has never been made entirely clear; this much is certain however, that Messrs. Intransigents wanted above all the practical establishment of the federal republic as rapidly as possible in order to come into possession of power and the many new government jobs to be set up in the various cantons. The Cortes in Madrid was delaying the dismemberment of Spain too long; hence they had to take a hand themselves and proclaim sovereign cantons everywhere. The past attitude of the (Bakuninist) International, which had been deeply involved in the Intransigent doings ever since the elections, led them to count on its participation; had it not just seized Alcoy by force, thus coming into open conflict with the government! In addition, the Bakuninists had preached for years that every revolutionary action from the top down was fatal, that everything had to be organized and carried out from below to the top. And now the opportunity was offered of realizing the celebrated principle of self-rule from below to the top at least for the various cities! It could not be otherwise; the Bakuninist workers allowed themselves to be beguiled and pulled the chestnuts out of the fire for the Intransigents, later to be repaid by these allies of theirs with kicks and rifle bullets, as is always the case.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Now what was the attitude of the Bakuninist members of the International in this whole movement? They had helped to give it the character of federalist dispersion; they had realized their ideal of anarchy, as far as that was possible. The same Bakuninists, who a few months before in Cordova had declared the establishment of revolutionary governments to be betrayal and deception of the workers, now sat in all the revolutionary municipal governments of Andalusia—but everywhere in the minority, so that the Intransigents could do as they pleased. While the latter retained political and military control, the workers were put off with pompous phrases or with alleged social reform resolutions of the crudest and most nonsensical sort, which existed, moreover, only on paper. As soon as the Bakuninist leaders demanded real concessions, they were turned down brusquely. The Intransigent heads of the movement had nothing more important to do than to tell the British newspaper correspondents that they rejected any connection with these so-called Internationalists and any responsibility for them, and to state that they were keeping their leaders, as well as all the refugees of the Paris Commune living there, under the sharpest police supervision. Finally, the Intransigents even fired on their Bakuninist allies, as we shall see, during the fighting against the government troops.

Thus it came about that after a few days the whole of Andalusia was in the hands of the armed Intransigents; Seville, Malaga, Granada, Cadiz, etc., fell into their hands almost without resistance. Each city proclaimed itself a sovereign canton and established a revolutionary governing committee (junta); Murcia, Cartagena and Valencia followed suit. A similar attempt, but of a more pacific nature, was made in Salamanca. Thus, most of the big cities of Spain were in the possession of the Insurgents, with the exception of Madrid, a purely luxury city that almost never takes decisive action, and Barcelona. If Barcelona had struck, the final victory would have been almost certain, and besides, the working class element in the movement would have been assured powerful backing. But we have seen that the Intransigents were rather powerless in Barcelona, while the Bakuninist members of the International, still very powerful at the time, seized on the general strike as a pretext for calming things down. So this time Barcelona was not on the job.

Nevertheless, the uprising, though started brainlessly, still had great chances of success if it had only been conducted with some sense, even after the fashion of Spanish military rebellions, where the garrison of one city revolts, marches to the next town, pulls the garrison of this town, which had been worked upon already, with it, and growing like an avalanche, advances to the capital, until a successful battle or the desertion of the troops sent against it decides the victory. This method was quite peculiarly applicable in this case. The insurgents had been organized everywhere in volunteer battalions for a long time, their discipline rather pitiful but certainly no more pitiful than that of the remnants of the old Spanish army, which had largely disinte-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

grated. The only dependable troops of the government were the gendarmes (Civil Guards), and these were scattered all over the country. The most important thing was to prevent the concentration of the gendarmes, and this could be done only by taking the offensive and daring to go out into the open field of battle. There was not much danger involved, as the government was able to oppose the volunteers only with troops just as undisciplined as themselves. And there was no alternative if they wanted to win.

But no. The federalism of the Intransigents and their Bakuninist satellites consisted precisely in each city acting on its own, declaring separation from the other cities and not cooperation with them to be the main thing, and thus blasting any possibility of a general offensive. What was an unavoidable evil in the German Peasant War and in the German uprisings of May, 1849—the scattering and isolation of the revolutionary troops, which permitted the same government troops to suppress one uprising after another—was here proclaimed as the principle of highest revolutionary wisdom. Bakunin lived to have this satisfaction. As early as September, 1870, he had declared (in *Lettres à un Francais*) that the only way to throw the Prussians out of France by means of a revolutionary struggle was to abolish all centralized leadership, leaving each city, each village, each community to wage war on its own. If the Prussian army, under single command, were thus confronted with revolutionary passions, victory was certain. Moltke's individual mind would have to vanish when confronted with the collective mind of the French people, at last left to itself again. The Frenchmen refused to realize that at the time, but in Spain Bakunin celebrated a brilliant victory, as we have seen and as we shall see still further.

In the meantime this uprising that had exploded without any pretext had made it impossible for Pi y Margall to negotiate with the Intransigents any longer. He had to resign; his place was taken by the pure Republicans of the stamp of Castelar, a bourgeois without any mask, whose first aim was to get rid of the labor movement, previously utilized by him but now a hindrance. One division was sent to Andalusia under General Pavia; another under Campos was concentrated against Valencia and Cartagena. The core of these troops was composed of the gendarmes collected together from all over Spain, all of them old soldiers whose discipline was still unshaken. As in the offensives of the Versailles army against Paris, the gendarmes were to provide the demoralized troops of the line with a firm backbone, everywhere constituting the spearheads of the offensive columns, a task that they did their best to fulfill in both respects. In addition, the divisons were given a few line regiments that had melted away, so that each of them totaled about 3,000 men. That was all the government was able to place in the field against the insurgents.

General Pavia started to move around the 20th of July. On the 24th Cordova was occupied by a detachment of gendarmes and line troops under Ripoll. On the 29th Pavia attacked barricaded Seville, which fell

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

into his hands on the 30th or the 31st —the telegrams often leave these dates uncertain. He left a flying column behind to subjugate the surrounding area and marched against Cadiz, the defenders of which defended only the entrance of the city, and even that only weakly, and let themselves be disarmed without resistance on August 4. In the days that followed he disarmed, likewise without resistance, San Lucar de Barrameda, San Roque, Tarifa, Algeciras, and a large number of smaller towns, each of which, however, had constituted itself a sovereign canton. At the same time he sent columns out against Malaga, which capitulated on August 3, and against Granada, which capitulated on the 8th without resistance, so that all Andalusia was subjugated by August 10, after less than fourteen days and almost without a struggle.

On July 26 Martinez Campos opened the offensive against Valencia. Here the uprising had been initiated by the workers. In the split of the Spanish International the real Internationalists had retained the majority in Valencia, and the new Spanish Federal Council had been shifted to that city. Soon after the proclamation of the republic when there was a prospect of revolutionary struggles, the Bakuninist workers of Valencia, distrusting the pacifying moves of the Barcelona leaders, cloaked in ultra-revolutionary phrases, had offered to join the real Internationalists in all local movements. When the cantonal movement broke out, both groups, utilizing the Intransigents, struck at once and drove out the troops.

The composition of the Valencia junta has not been learned; but the reports of the British correspondents indicate that the workers predominated decisively, as they did in the Valencia volunteer forces. These same correspondents spoke of the Valencia insurgents with a respect that they are far from according to the other insurgents, predominantly Intransigents. They extolled their military discipline and foretold long resistance and hard fighting. They were not mistaken. Valencia, an open city, held out against the offensive of Campos' division from July 26 until August 8, or longer than all Andalusia together.

In the province of Murcia, the capital of the same name had been occupied without resistance; after the fall of Valencia Campos moved against Cartagena, one of the strongest fortresses in Spain, protected on the land side by a continuous wall and advanced forts on the dominating heights. The 3,000 men of the government forces were powerless with their light field guns against the heavy artillery of the forts of course, and had to content themselves with a siege on the land side. But this was of little importance as long as the Cartagenians dominated the sea with their navy, which had been captured in the harbor.

The insurgents, occupied solely with their own affairs, while fighting was going on in Valencia and Andalusia, thought of the outside world only after the other uprisings had been suppressed, when they began to run short of money and foodstuffs themselves. Only then was an endeavor made to move on Madrid, which was at least 270 miles away, more than twice as far as Valencia or Granada for instance! The expedition came to

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a lamentable end not far from Cartagena; the siege blocked all further sorties on land; resort was then had to sorties of the fleet. And what sorties! A renewed uprising of the maritime cities that had just been conquered, under the pressure of the Cartagena warships, was out of the question. So the fleet of the sovereign canton of Cartagena confined itself to threaten the other maritime cities from Valencia to Malaga—likewise sovereign according to Cartagena theory—with bombardment and, if necessary, actually to bombard them in case they did not bring the demanded foodstuffs and a military contribution in the form of hard cash on board. As long as these cities, as sovereign cantons, were up in arms against the government, Cartagena's principle was: each for himself! As soon as they were conquered, the principle to be applied was: all for Cartagena! That is how the Intransigents of Cartagena and their Bakuninist aides interpreted the federation of sovereign cantons.

To reinforce the ranks of the fighters for liberty the government of Cartagena released the convicts, about 1,800 in number, who were confined in the city prison—the worst robbers and murderers in Spain. After the disclosures of the report on the "Alliance" there can no longer be any doubt that this revolutionary step was suggested to them by the Bakuninists. In this report it is proved how Bakunin is full of enthusiasm for the "release of all evil passions," proclaiming the Russian highwaymen to be the model of all true revolutionaries. What is good for the Russians is good for the Spaniards. So when the Cartagena government released the "evil passions" of the 1,800 incarcerated cutthroats and thus brought the demoralization of its own troops to a head, it was acting wholly in the spirit of Bakunin. And when the Spanish government awaited the subjection of Cartagena from the inner disorganization of the city's defenders instead of shelling its own fortifications into ruins it pursued a wholly correct policy.

IV

Now let us read the report of the "New Madrid Federation" on this whole movement:

"A congress was to have been held in Valencia on the second Sunday in August to decide, among other things, the position to be taken by the Spanish International Federation on the important political events that had occurred in Spain since February 11, the day the republic was proclaimed. But the senseless (*descabellada*, literally: 'crumpled') cantonal uprising, which has failed so pitifully and in which the members of the International zealously participated in nearly all the revolting provinces, has not merely paralyzed the activity of the Federal Council by scattering the majority of its members, but also disorganized the local federations almost completely, and, what is worst of all, it has subjected their members to all the hatred and all the persecution that follow on every disgracefully initiated and unsuccessful popular uprising. . . .

"When the cantonal uprising broke out and the juntas, *i.e.*, the governments of the cantons, were established, those (the Bakuninists) who had shouted so loudly against political power and had accused us of authoritarianism hastened to enter these governments. In large cities, such as Seville, Cadiz, San Lucar de Barrameda, Granada, and Valencia, many of the Internationalists who call themselves anti-authoritarians sat on the cantonal juntas without any other program than the self-rule of the province or the canton. This is officially proved by the proclamations and other documents published by these

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

juntas over the signatures of well-known Internationalists of this stamp.

"Such a flagrant contradiction between theory and practice, between propaganda and deed, would mean but little if any advantage for our association could have arisen from it, or any progress in the organization of our forces, any approach to the attainment of our principal goal, the emancipation of the working class. Just the contrary occurred, as it could not have been otherwise. The basic condition was lacking, the active cooperation of the Spanish proletariat, which was so easy to achieve as soon as action was taken in the name of the International. Agreement was lacking between the local federations; the movement was left to individual or local initiative without any leadership (except that which the secret Alliance was able to force upon it, and to our shame be it said, this Alliance still dominates the Spanish section of the International); without any program but that of our natural enemies, the bourgeois Republicans.

"And so the cantonal uprising was defeated in the most ignominious fashion, almost without resistance but in its defeat it pulled down with it the prestige and the organization of the International in Spain. No excess, no crime, no act of violence occurs but that the Republicans attribute it today to the members of the International. It has even come to pass in Seville, we are assured, that the Intransigents fired upon their allies, the Bakuninist members of the International, during the fighting. The reaction, skilfully exploiting our blunders, is inciting the Republicans to prosecute us and is slandering us to the great indifferent masses. It seems to want to accomplish what it could not do during the Sagasta era: to give the Spanish workers a bad name among the masses.

"In Barcelona a large number of workers' sections have seceded from the International, loudly protesting against the people of the journal *La Federacion* (chief organ of the Bakuninists) and its incomprehensible attitude. The federations have voted to dissolve in Jerez, Puerto de Santa Maria, and other towns. In Loga (province of Granada) the few members of the International living there have been driven out by the populace. In Madrid, where the greatest freedom of all is enjoyed, the old (Bakuninist) federation does not show the slightest sign of life, while our federation is compelled to remain inactive and silent if it does not want to be burdened with another's sins. In the cities of the North the Carlist war, fought more bitterly every day, prevents any activity on our part. Finally, in Valencia, where the government emerged the victor after fifteen days of fighting, members of the International who have not taken flight must remain in hiding, and the Federal Council is completely dissolved."

So much for the Madrid report. We see that it fully agrees with the foregoing narrative.

What, then, is the outcome of our whole inquiry?

1. The Bakuninists were compelled to throw their whole previous program overboard as soon as they were confronted with a serious revolutionary situation. First they sacrificed the doctrine of the duty to abstain from politics and particularly from elections. Next came anarchy, the abolition of the state; instead of abolishing the state, they tried, rather, to establish a number of new, small states. Then they dropped the principle that the workers must not take part in any revolution that does not aim at the immediate, complete emancipation of the proletariat, and joined an avowedly purely bourgeois movement. Finally, they went against the article of faith that they had just proclaimed —that the establishment of a revolutionary government is nothing but a new deception and a new betrayal of the working class—by goodnaturedly figuring in the government committees of the various towns almost everywhere as a powerless minority, outvoted and politically exploited by the bourgeoisie.

2. This repudiation of the principles preached up to that time took

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

place in the most cowardly, lying manner, however, and under the pricks of an evil conscience, so that neither the Bakuninists nor the masses they led entered the movement with any program or at all knew what they wanted. What was the natural result? Either that the Bakuninists hindered all movement, as in Barcelona; or that they were driven to isolated, unplanned, and idiotic uprisings, as in Alcoy and San Lucar de Barrameda; or else that the leadership of the rising fell into the hands of the intransigent bourgeoisie, as in most of the instances. Thus, as soon as it came to action, the ultra-revolutionary clamor of the Bakuninists materialized either in pacification, or in uprisings that were hopeless from the outset, or in affiliation with a bourgeois party that exploited the workers politically in the most shameful manner and treated them with kicks into the bargain.

3. Nothing is left of the so-called principles of anarchy, the free federation of independent groups, and so on, but a boundless and senseless scattering of the means of revolutionary struggle, which permitted the government, with a handful of troops, to subdue one town after another almost without resistance.

4. The end of the story was not only that the well-organized and numerous Spanish section of the International—both the bogus and the real—was involved in the collapse of the Intransigents and today is practically dissolved, but also that it has been saddled with the innumerably invented excesses without which the philistines of all countries cannot imagine a workers' uprising, and that thereby the international reorganization of the Spanish proletariat may have been made impossible for years to come.

5. In a word, the Bakuninists in Spain have furnished us an incomparable example of how *not* to make a revolution.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BUILDING THE PEOPLE'S FRONT IN HARLEM

AN ANALYSIS OF THE MUNICIPAL ELECTION RESULTS IN HARLEM, NEW YORK CITY, 1937

BY JAMES W. FORD AND GEORGE E. BLAKE

INTRODUCTORY

As TIME moves along, the effects of the November, 1937, municipal elections in New York City become clearer. Who could doubt that had Tammany won, our city would be reeking with corruption and attacks against the trade union organizations, while a corrupt boss-controlled City Council would be carrying through reactionary measures against the interests of the people?

Who could have conceived, in a Tammany-controlled Harlem, of a situation the like of which has never been seen in the city or state: A Harlem Legislative Conference called by a coalition of New York State Assemblymen, a conference in which the people of all Harlem Assembly Districts participate through representatives of varied organizations and political affiliations. The conference has held three magnificent sessions, on December 18, January 8 and 22.

As the Honorable Vito Marcantonio, progressive leader in the 20th Congressional District embracing several Harlem Assembly Districts, and prime mover of the Harlem Legislative Conference, said on closing the second session:

"This conference is the greatest thing that has ever happened in the city or state. We shall have all of the prominent city and state officials appearing before us to listen to the demands of the people. This is a people's movement."

Such is the character of the conference. More than 500 people attended the sessions, with 300 delegates, among whom were more than 40 trade union representatives and outstanding members of the community, representing every type of organization, including the Communist Party.

This conference came as a result of the city-wide progressive victory in the November elections, but particularly of the election of the Honorable Oscar Garcia Rivera, Porto Rican, by a coalition of political groups and forces in lower Harlem—the American Labor Party, the Fusion Party, the Republican Party, Porto Rican Independent Democrats, and the Communist Party —on a progressive labor and people's platform.

The Harlem Legislative Conference also results from a growing understanding of the problems of the people and the impact of the united action on some prominent Harlem Assemblymen: Robert Justice, Negro Democrat of the 19th Assembly District; William

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

T. Andrews, Negro Democrat of the 21st A.D.; and Walter Fitzgerald, progressive Irish-Catholic assemblyman of the 18th A.D.

The conference is working out a legislative program on the following issues: relief, the right of labor to organize and bargain collectively, the protection of civil liberties, more and better hospitalization, schools, parks and playgrounds, decent houses and the elimination of slums and firetraps, the wiping out of discrimination against Negroes and other un-American practices, and the issues of peace and democracy.

It was on these basic issues that the November municipal elections were fought out. Under the slogans, "Peace and Democracy," "Defeat Reaction," the people delivered a shattering blow to Tammany Hall. These were the chief slogans of the Communist Party, advanced in the beginning of the campaign. This victory for progress and democracy has further consolidated and advanced the People's Front movement. Consequently, this election has placed its imprint upon political currents nationally. The coalition of progressive forces around the American Labor Party broke through a ring of corruption which had hamstrung the people and the political life of New York for scores of years. What seemed to be an unconquerable Tammany Hall was almost crushed. This has given strength to the forces of progress, and is convincing thousands of workers and many sections of the population that the People's Front policy of the Communist Party for progress and peace is correct.

An analysis of the election will show that the Negro people moved forward to secure justice for themselves and to help advance the fight to preserve democracy. It will also show that in the Harlem areas, the many varied national groups living in close proximity are merging their political power in a progressive movement without which no effective defense of their common interests can be made. Here is a profound lesson of the People's Front: it is a historic step to unify in common struggle the various national groups. The progressive forces in line with a People's Front movement around labor are showing that it can be done.

Every Assembly District in Harlem, with its respective concentration of Negro, Italian, Porto Rican, and Irish population, voted substantial pluralities for the labor and progressive ticket headed by Mayor LaGuardia. The results are especially significant in view of the following:

1. Tammany Hall waged a desperate campaign in these districts; it poured in thousands of dollars; and Jeremiah T. Mahoney, the leading Tammany candidate, spoke frequently in Harlem, particularly in the final ten days of the campaign.

2. All of the Harlem and Washington Heights districts have been Tammany strongholds for many years, consistently returning Tammany assemblymen to Albany and defeating with relative ease every anti-Tammany challenge for power within the Democratic organization. In 1933, LaGuardia, then the candidate of the Republican-Fusian Parties, lost the 17th Assembly District, mainly Porto Rican; the 19th Assembly District, solidly Negro; and the 22nd Assem-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bly District, mainly Irish with many Negroes in the lower section. These districts are under the leadership of one of the most powerful and unscrupulous figures in Tammany Hall, namely, Jimmy Hines, who with Flynn of the Bronx and Kelly of Brooklyn sponsored the candidacy of Mahoney, and carried through the defeat of Copeland in the primaries.

3. An important factor was the position taken by the *Amsterdam News*. This outstanding Negro newspaper of Harlem and the metropolitan area supported the Tammany candidates, particularly Mahoney. It labeled La Guardia a dictator, an irresponsible politician who opposed the enfranchisement of the Negro and followed a conscious policy of discrimination. Above all, it tried to give the impression that Mahoney was identified with President Roosevelt and the New Deal. This demagogic argument was calculated to win for Mahoney the support of the Negro people who in 1936 departed from traditional support of the Republican Party to give Roosevelt a 4-to-1 majority in Harlem. As a matter of fact, in the Democratic primaries, Mahoney won the 21st A.D., and lost the 19th A.D. by only 26 votes, notwithstanding the fact that Perry and Bruce, white and Negro Tammany chieftains respectively, officially supported Copeland, precisely because Mahoney was generally considered a New Deal progressive.

4. In the 18th A.D. (East Harlem), center of Italian political life in New York City, the fascist organizations which dominate the community campaigned actively against LaGuardia. Copeland in the primaries received his largest plurality in this district—10 to 1. The fascists are not completely united, it is true. One section operates within the Republican Party, and even flirts with LaGuardia. The strongest group, however, led by Generoso Pope, editor of *Il Progresso*, chief agent of Mussolini in America, and the Circolo Mario Morgantini (largest fascist club in New York) was bitterly opposed to LaGuardia's re-election.

5. In the 17th A.D., as in the other Harlem districts, the Tammany organization made considerable capital out of the failure of the city administration to provide substantial benefits to the community. Some concessions were granted in Upper and East Harlem, all too meager, it is true; but practically nothing had been done for the destitute Porto Rican, Negro, and other populations of the 17th A.D.

6. Finally, the progressive forces, particularly the American Labor Party, were poorly organized in Harlem, with the exception of the 17th and 18th Assembly Districts.

THE MAYORALTY RETURNS

In the seven assembly districts, La Guardia received a total of 116,968 votes as against 72,388 for Mahoney, or about 62% of the total vote; the same proportion as for the city as a whole. The vote by districts is significant:

	LaGuardia	*Mahoney*	% *LaGuardia Vote*
17th A.D.	10,409	6,648	61
18th A.D.	14,548	9,358	61
19th A.D.	13,420	6,167	68
20th A.D.	9,320	6,064	60
21st A.D.	17,540	8,078	69
22nd A.D.	16,033	11,885	57
23rd A.D.	35,698	24,188	59
Total	116,968	72,388	62%

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The tabulation shows that the highest proportionate plurality for La Guardia was won in the 19th and 21st Assembly Districts, the districts comprising solid Negro constituencies, These districts gave LaGuardia a majority of more than 2 to 1, in spite of every effort by Tammany to keep them in line. In 1936 the Negro people broke one tradition to support the struggle of the forces of progress against reaction; and in 1937 they broke another; not back to Republicanism, but continuing on the same path that inevitably leads to Negro and white unity in the People's Front movement of America.

The following table shows the shift in the mayoralty vote for LaGuardia in the Harlem districts, from 1933 to the recent elections:

	1933	*1937*	*Increase*
17th A.D.	27%	61%	34%
18th A.D.	50%	61%	11%
19th A.D.	34%	68%	34%
20th A.D.	48%	60%	12%
21st A.D.	38%	69%	31%
22nd A.D.	33%	57%	24%
23rd A.D.	37%	59%	22%
Total, Harlem and Wash'gt'n Hts.	38%	62%	24%
New York City:	39%	62%	23%

It is obvious from these data that the greatest shift in voting occurred in the 17th A.D. (47% Negro vote) and the previously mentioned Negro districts, the 19th and 21st A.D.'s.

THE AMERICAN LABOR PARTY

The American Labor Party played a conspicuous role in the campaign, particularly in the 17th and 18th Assembly Districts, and in the 23rd A.D. (Washington Heights, the largest A. D. in the county). In New York City the A.L.P. vote for LaGuardia was 36% of his total vote; in New York county, 30%; in Harlem, 32%. The figures for Harlem are as follows, by Assembly Districts:

17th	40%
18th	44%
19th	23%
20th	29%
21st	25%
22nd	28%
23rd	30%
Total	32%

In the East Side districts of the 17th A.D. (*Porto Rican neighborhood*) and in the election districts in the 18th A.D. North (Italian), the A.L.P. vote was considerably higher than the average for the district as a whole, and even exceeded the Republican vote.

In these two districts the A.L.P. established a strong basis when it absorbed the All People's Party, in January, 1937. With Vito Marcantonio as the Congressional leader of the A.L.P., an active and energetic campaign was conducted in both districts, with the excellent results noted above.

The figures of the increase of the A.L.P. vote in 1935 and 1936 throw additional light on the progressive developments in Harlem. Listing them by assembly districts, we have:*

	1936	*1937*
17th	1,343	4,514
18th	1,377	6,357
19th	781	3,148
20th	656	2,800
21st	1,075	4,439
22nd	1,378	4,512
23rd	3,980	11,358
Total	11,590	37,128

* These figures do not include the vote for the All People's Party.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The increase in A.L.P. strength even in the 19th, 20th, 21st, and 22nd A.D.'s, notwithstanding the weaknesses of the local organizations, is an indication of the tremendous possibilities that exist for building a powerful People's Front in Harlem.

In 1936, the A.L.P. vote in Harlem constituted but 5% of the total vote. In the city the A.L.P. vote was about 10%. In the current elections, the A.L.P. vote in Harlem rose to 20%, practically equaling that for the city as a whole. Thus, Harlem is catching up with the progressive movement of New York as a whole.

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

In the Assembly elections in Harlem, a victory of real significance was won in the election of Oscar Garcia Rivera, in the 17th A.D. Rivera was the candidate of the American Labor Party, the Republican Party, and the Fusion Party. He was endorsed by the Communist Party, the City Progressive Party, and the Porto Rican Independent Democrats, as well as by a score of trade unions and local organizations. A united front committee was officially organized which consisted of delegates from each of the groups, including the Communist Party, to carry on the campaign and coordinate all activity.

The 17th A.D. has been a strong Tammany district for years. Solomon and Greenberg, who share the leadership of the local Democratic organizations, have ruled the district with an iron hand, contemptuous of the Negro and Porto Rican constituency. They skilfully played one group against the other, in order to defeat any progressive opposition within the Democratic Party. Neither group ever had an effective voice in making policy in the organization, or ever took up the burning issues in a community where unemployment, high rents, bad housing, and general destitution affect the great majority of the people.

It soon became quite clear that the center for fighting for progressive policies in the 17th A.D. was the American Labor Party, headed by Vito Marcantonio. Here was an organization that combined considerable practical experience with the issues of a People's Front character. The organization, with its three clubs in the territory, attracted many former Democrats and Republicans who knew the district intimately, and who believed in a People's Front policy. The people of Lower Harlem, overwhelmingly sympathetic to the Spanish Loyalists and its People's Front government, knew what reaction and fascism mean. They have learned how to fight this menace on their own ground and with the same general policy: Unite all friends and supporters of democracy! Isolate the Tammany forces! Unite for victory!

These slogans were concretely realized in a whirlwind campaign that rocked Tammany on its heels. Garcia Rivera spoke three and four times a night to all kinds of organizations, at great mass meetings, over the radio, and on the streets. The A.L.P. canvassed the election districts; a concentrated campaign was organized to win the West Side vote of the Negroes.

Rivera obtained the endorsement of the Reverend John H. Johnson, pastor of St. Martin's Church, himself a candidate of the Seabury

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Committee for City Council, and a very popular Negro leader in Harlem. Rivera spoke at Johnson's rally in the Mount Olivet Church, attended by 1,500 people, 90% Negro, a majority of whom lived in the 17th A.D. A list of prominent Negroes, including Reverend Shelton Hale Bishop, Reverend Dr. John W. Robinson, and James W. Ford signed an endorsement which was widely publicized in the form of a leaflet. Rivera attended one of the sessions of the National Negro Congress at Philadelphia; he endorsed the Harlem Scottsboro Conference, and in other ways advanced and popularized a program of Negro-Porto Rican unity.

The crisis of the Democratic Party deepened as the campaign developed. Three Porto Rican leaders in the Wichita Club, one a member of the County Committee, signed a statement accusing the Democratic Party of a consistent, deliberate policy of racial discrimination, and ended by endorsing Rivera. Many other Democrats who in 1936 supported Lanzetta came over to support Rivera. It became necessary, however, to reject endorsements of certain Democrats, because of their previous unscrupulous connections, who were anxious to get on the bandwagon. Authoritative reports were made that the Tammany captains and canvassers, in the face of popular support for Rivera, were advising the people to vote for Rivera by voting the Democratic star! This was an unexpected piece of chicanery, which was answered by a warning leaflet in the district. Attempts were made to associate Meyer Alterman, the Democratic incumbent and candidate, with the progressives and the labor movement. "Didn't he vote for the child labor amendment?" The *New York Post* advanced this argument, and in an editorial even urged the A.L.P. not to oppose Alterman. At a meeting at Park Palace, Marcantonio blasted these arguments.

At 9 p.m. on Election Day Alterman conceded the election. Rivera received a total of 8,738, as against 6,220 for Alterman. Rivera lost one district on the East Side, Solomon's own, by 4 votes; and three on the West Side. While Rivera's vote was 1,700 less than the vote for LaGuardia, his plurality was equal to that of LaGuardia, and in some districts on the East Side even larger. Rivera's victory was due in part to the LaGuardia sweep. At the same time there were many split votes among the Democrats, which favored Garcia.

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

It is no exaggeration to say that the Lower Harlem Section of the Communist Party played a *decisive* political and organizational role in the victory of the united front candidate, Rivera. The united front was originally organized at the initiative of the Communist Party. The withdrawal of the candidacy of Jose Santiago, chairman of the Lower Harlem Section of the Communist Party, stimulated and advanced the movement for unity. In 1936 Santiago received over 2,000 votes as Communist candidate for the Assembly. The Lower Harlem Section of the Communist Party conducted the most aggressive independent campaign of all the affiliated groups. The leadership and the entire membership worked like Trojans.

The mass meeting on October 26,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with Earl Browder as main speaker, and with Rivera and the Reverend John H. Johnson as additional speakers, attracted an audience of over 1,500 people. The Communist Party parade on the eve of the election included about a thousand marchers. The Party negotiated the endorsement of Johnson and the other Negro leaders, and supplied active forces for the day-to-day work of the A.L.P. on the West Side. Rivera on several occasions remarked that the Communists were a vital part of the united front, since theirs was the only Party that could win the support and vote of the Negro people.

Above all, the Communist Party helped to smooth out the many conflicts that continually arose within the committee, and succeeded in defeating all factional maneuvers of enemy groups and individuals that tried to paralyze the campaign within the committee itself. This was no easy task. Republicans (including many elements hostile to Marcantonio in 1936), A.L.P.'ers, and Independent Democrats make an uneasy combination. It took the greatest patience and skill of the Party leaders to solve all conflicts. At first a proposal was made by authoritative leaders in the campaign to dissociate Rivera from the Republican Party and identify him with the A.L.P. alone. This the Communist Party opposed. *This supposedly "pure" tactic would have ensured the victory of Tammany, and the defeat of the progressive movement.* The argument was then advanced that the committee should not cooperate with any of the Democratic groups. This was also a mistake, since it underestimated the possibilities of the Porto Rican front attracting the support of rank-and-file Democrats, and since it took no cognizance of the actual disintegration of the Democratic Party itself. Certainly, there were dangers. Some of the Democrats paid lip-service to Rivera, in order to demoralize the campaign for LaGuardia. Pressure was brought to bear on Rivera to repudiate or at least criticize LaGuardia. Vito Marcantonio again was helpful in clarifying this question, and in emphasizing above all the role of the A.L.P. as the center of the campaign, and the organization to build.

It would surely be incorrect for the Communist Party to take all the credit for the campaign, or even the lion's share. There were a veritable host of rank-and-file workers and many leading figures, such as Vito Marcantonio, who did yeoman service. Garcia Rivera himself was a tower of strength through the campaign. He contributed a great deal to the making of policy, and, though little known in the community before the campaign, won the hearts of his constituents by his fiery and energetic campaigning, and by his obvious sincerity and good faith.

The election of Garcia Rivera was a great victory because it advanced the People's Front generally in Harlem; because it defeated Tammany in one of its strongest districts, the 17th A.D.; because it created a healthy base for Negro and Porto Rican unity; and because the people of the district have at last a genuine progressive representative in Albany who will fight for the program of the A.L.P.

Now it is necessary for the A.L.P. to cash in on the results, and remedy

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the present unstable situation by building an organization of thousands.

Another victory for progress was won in the 20th A.D. with the election of the Republican-A.L.P.-Fusion candidate, Walter Fitzgerald. His Democratic opponent, Michael J. Keenan, the incumbent in office, had voted a consistent "No" on the good bills and "Yes" on the bad bills during the last session in Albany. Fitzgerald's victory came as a welcome surprise. The 20th A.D. was regarded as a safe Tammany district. Fitzgerald is *not* Garcia Rivera. The coalition that elected him was not the clear-cut progressive movement that was organized in the 17th A.D. Nevertheless, Fitzgerald is not a reactionary Republican. He and the local Republican organization are allies of Vito Marcantonio. During the Republican primaries, an attempt was made by a leader of the Circolo Mario Morgantini, Del Bano, to win the leadership on a fascist program. Fitzgerald and Duggan (local Republican leader) defeated Del Bano on an anti-fascist program, even though hesitatingly and unclearly formulated.

In the Assembly elections of the 19th A.D., Robert W. Justice, Tammany candidate, was barely victorious over Ira Kemp, Republican-Fusion nominee. Benjamin McLaurin, A.L.P. candidate, ran third with 2,048 votes out of a total of about 17,000. Kemp, during his hectic career, shifted his allegiance to suit his purposes. He has been active for a long time fighting and harming trade unionism in Harlem, by fighting against the unity of Negro and white workers and the C.I.O. movement. Naturally, he capitalized on the fact that he ran on the same ticket with LaGuardia. LaGuardia, by his silence, and against the best interests of his own progressive program, tolerated this apparent endorsement of Kemp. The campaign of B. F. McLaurin, an organizer of the most popular union of Negro workers, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, was not sufficiently developed or utilized.

In the 21st A.D., William T. Andrews, Democrat, was reelected, but by a surprisingly small margin. Andrews has a good record. On several occasions he has indicated strong progressive convictions and a favorable attitude toward the A.L.P. program. His candidacy was not opposed by the A.L.P. because of his general record. The Communist Party in the 21st A.D. withdrew its own candidate, even though the necessary number of signatures was collected to qualify him. Andrews's Tammany connections made it impossible for many progressives formally to endorse him. He is, with all the limitations that flow from his connections, nevertheless responsive to the needs of the people, and a force for progress.

CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The governing body of the city contains not a single Negro representative! All five Negro candidates, including Reverend John H. Johnson, candidate of the Citizens Non-Partisan Committee, were defeated. This is a most serious matter which concerns the entire progressive movement in the city, above all the American Labor Party. The City Council represents a genuine step forward in the democratization of city government. Under

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the old system Harlem elected two Negro representatives to the Board of Aldermen. The system of borough-wide elections necessitates a conscious policy of support of progressive Negro candidates by the progressive groups, if Negro representation is to be assured.

The A.L.P. did little or nothing to popularize the candidacy of Reverend John H. Johnson. True, it endorsed Johnson, together with a number of other progressives, but this was at the close of the campaign; and even then it did not act to promote his candidacy throughout the borough and impress upon its supporters the importance of electing a Negro to the Council. It remained for the Communist Party to take the most decisive action in support of Johnson. He was given third choice, following Amter of the Communist Party and Vladek of the American Labor Party. Tens of thousands of leaflets were issued throughout the borough by the Communist Party, urging the voters to support Johnson. Our whole campaign apparatus in the county contributed considerably.

The American Labor Party will not be built into a party of power in New York without the active support and participation of the Negro people. An indifferent attitude towards the question of Negro representation in government will fundamentally weaken the A.L.P. Johnson could have been elected if the A.L.P. and the Progressives had taken the position of the Communist Party. It is imperative in the near future for the American Labor Party to study the whole problem of the Negro people, in order to avoid these opportunist errors in the development of the organization.

WEAKNESSES IN THE CAMPAIGN

The Communist Party, on the whole, conducted a vigorous campaign in Harlem. But many mistakes were made. Many tasks were left undone during the feverish months of September and October. One outstanding weakness was the generally poor campaign for the Communist candidate for City Council, Comrade Amter. Our independent campaign in behalf of the progressive ticket did not sufficiently popularize Comrade Amter's candidacy and, through this campaign, feature the whole program of the Party, including the fight for socialism. This was true even in the 17th A.D. where our campaign forces were best organized. The opportunity was especially favorable in Harlem, where the vanguard role of the Party has been in other ways so clearly demonstrated to the masses.

Another outstanding weakness was the failure sufficiently to concentrate in the 19th A.D., the key Negro district of Harlem. The campaign of the A.L.P. was poorly organized. This was our fault, in the main. It is true the county and the state leadership of the A.L.P. failed to take an active interest in the affairs of the organization in Harlem. The Negro question was completely ignored in the state platform. This attitude was heightened by the general feeling in the LaGuardia camp that no active campaign was necessary to win the Negro vote, that it was inconsequential anyway, and if the *Amsterdam News* called La Guardia a dictator, and spoke for Mahoney, it reached only a small

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

group of people and hence didn't matter!

In spite of these general shortcomings of the A.L.P. itself, the Communist Party failed to take all possible steps to build the organization in Harlem. We failed to coordinate and bring together in one united campaign the scattered progressive groups that supported the LaGuardia ticket independently. Little or nothing was done to enlist the support of the growing trade union movement in Harlem, particularly the unions affiliated to the Negro Labor Committee. The Negro Labor Committee itself also shares in the failure to develop a campaign for the candidacy of B. F. McLaurin, an ideal candidate and a splendid labor man. If the A.L.P. is to be built in Harlem, if the progressive forces are to be organized around labor, if labor racketeers and fakers are to be defeated, then the Harlem Negro Labor Committee has got to snap out of its present lethargy, organize the unorganized and generally become an active force in the community.

Finally, the Communist Party failed to take advantage of the excellent possibilities to build the Party during the election campaign. Recruiting, it is true, jumped considerably in October in the 19th and 21st Assembly Districts (Upper Harlem) particularly, but in the main, it was not the result of election campaign activity. Recruiting was especially poor in the 17th A.D., where the Party was so outstanding an independent factor in the elections. The *Daily Worker* and *Sunday Worker* circulation remained stationary. The Party press was not utilized effectively to communicate our program to the masses.

CONCLUSION — TASKS

Notwithstanding these many weaknesses, the Party in Harlem accomplished a great deal. Many important lessons were learned. Even our Washington Heights section and the new East Harlem section, with a small membership, impressed the local groups in their districts with the energy and effectiveness of their work. The Party is definitely recognized as an important factor, not only for its propaganda, but for its ability to organize a campaign and get the votes. The Communist Party is recognized as part of the progressive movement. This fact was effectively driven home during the campaign in Harlem.

Our tasks may be summarized as follows:

1. Build the A.L.P. Strengthen the apparatus in each district, strengthen the leadership, and initiate a campaign of activity around the issues of the day in the community. Affiliate the Harlem unions to the A.L.P.

2. Special concentration in the 19th and 21st A.D.'s. Rally the progressive, independent Negro leaders to help in building the A.L.P. Build the Communist Party branch in the 19th A.D. as the political leader of that community.

3. Prepare for the sessions of the state legislature. Organize under the sponsorship of the elected progressive Assemblymen in Harlem *a mass legislative conference*. Study measures to be introduced in the City Council. Act to support progressive legislation in the United States Congress.

4. Prepare now for the Congressional and Assembly elections of 1938. If this campaign is not well under

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

way before March we are going to experience tremendous difficulties in the fall elections.

5. Intensify the Party Building Drive. Drive home the lessons of the election campaign. *Organize the work of the Party branches on an election district basis at once.*

These are some of our immediate tasks. It remains for the Party to develop the next steps in the crystallization of the People's Front in Harlem. The forces are gathering rapidly. The hour is ripe. Now is the time to transform the big vote for the progressive ticket to win bread for the people; to realize the program of the A.L.P.; to extend the movement for jobs, more adequate relief, civil rights, better housing, municipal improvements, etc.

The eyes of the Negro people throughout the country were upon the New York elections; our actions should be a guide and an inspiration for Negroes everywhere.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FARMERS ADVANCE IN THE MOVEMENT FOR THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

BY JERRY COLEMAN

THE past three months have witnessed a significant advance in the movement for a strong farmer-labor alliance. Workers and farmers are increasingly recognizing their community of interests, and both are realizing they have to unite to stop the drive of Big Business to protect monopoly profits at the expense of the people.

The annual convention of the Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union of America, held last November in Oklahoma City, made history when it passed a resolution on cooperation with labor. Following the convention the newly elected national board invited both the C.I.O. and A. F. of L. to its St. Paul meeting. At this meeting an agreement for cooperation with Labor's Non-Partisan League was signed. The agreement calls for state and national legislative conferences to work out a joint program, as well as for joint work in the 1938 election campaign to advance their legislative program.

It is not unlikely that this agreement between the Farmers' Union and Labor's Non-Partisan League influenced Secretary Wallace to make his stirring appeal to farmers to support the Wage-Hour Bill. It no doubt helped to stiffen Secretary Wallace in his opposition to the policies of the banker-landlord-controlled Farm Bureau.

Labor's recognition that the time is ripe for joint action with the farmers as allies is best voiced by John L. Lewis in a recent issue of *Country Home Magazine.* Lewis calls for a "central body which would represent all farmers, all tenants, all farm labor" which would "stand shoulder to shoulder with other unions in a solid front."

It is significant that these events occurred in the midst of Wall Street's sit-down strike against the New Deal. While the Grange, the Farm Bureau, reactionary farm papers, reactionary Congressmen from farm districts, and all the flunkies Big Business could muster were howling for the death of the New Deal, these forces of progress came together to defend the people's gains under the New Deal and strengthen their fight for a bigger share of democracy and security. Now it is important that *labor and farmers weld a firm alliance to continue advancing their interests, and to present a solid united front to defeat the reactionary and fascist attacks of Wall Street.*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE 1938 ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The Congressional elections this year will be a testing ground for farmer-labor unity and the crystallizing of the People's Front movement. The agreement between the Farmers' Union and Labor's Non-Partisan League says: "State and national conferences shall be held for the purpose of planning joint action to further the legislative program during the elections of 1938." Our Party must give all possible assistance to organization of these farmer-labor legislative conferences in the counties, congressional districts and states. States like Minnesota, Wisconsin, New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, where progressive political action has made its greatest advances, should lead the way in organizing such conferences to cement farmer-labor unity on the political front.

While the Farmers' Union has set a fine example in its pact with Labor's Non-Partisan League, it must be remembered that its membership is yet small compared to the total farm population. It is vitally important that all farm organizations and cooperatives be urged to attend these conferences. Although the national leadership of the Grange and Farm Bureau is reactionary, the lower organizations are much more likely to appreciate the community of interests of labor and farmer, and the need for joint political action.

Our Party in New York has properly criticized the American Labor Party for not laying enough stress on farm issues in its legislative platform. No political party can hope to win statewide victories without farm support. Governor Lehman, who is perhaps wise in the ways of politics, listed about ten farm planks in his program for the present legislative session.

In many rural counties the workers were defeated last year in their first venture in independent politics (through Labor's Non-Partisan League), because they failed to draw in the farmers to participate in the campaigns and failed to advance a legislative program for farmers. Our Party must utilize the political lessons of these defeats to show that farmer-labor unity is vital to success.

Alabama offers a good example in the defeat of a reactionary Bourbon Democrat. The Alabama Farmers' Union and Labor's Non-Partisan League joined forces to support Lister Hill, New Deal Democrat, in the race for the Senate vacancy left by Justice Hugo Black. Tom Teflin, the reactionary, was defeated by a large margin. Although Lister Hill may not be all we want in a progressive, he was elected on his pledge to support all New Deal legislation. This is a clear defeat for reaction; it widens the split between progressive and reactionary Democrats and is a blow to the alliance between the Southern Bourbon Democrats and Wall Street.

The political demands of workers and small farmers are both directed against Big Business. It is important that progressive legislative programs be widely popularized among farmers to demonstrate the community of interest with labor and to counteract the tons of Wall Street propaganda spread among farmers to poison them against labor. Our Party should leave no stone unturned in the campaign to win and consolidate farm support.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

From the legislative conferences and the election campaigns should come rich experiences in winning the farmers for an alliance with labor and for a People's Front.

The surest way to consolidate progress on the political front is through strong organization on the economic front. There are about 100,000 members in the Farmers' Union. There are perhaps as many more farmers organized in small crop unions and cooperatives. In the main they represent the most progressive organization among small farmers.

The National Grange and the Farm Bureau Federation are the largest farm organizations, with about 400,000 members each. Their membership consists principally of middle and rich farmers. Much duplication in membership is admitted. The Farm Bureau exercises wide influence mainly through its control of the Agricultural Extension Service, and most County Farm Agents on government payrolls act as Bureau organizers. The Grange is the oldest of the farm organizations and depends on well-to-do community leaders for its influence. Although they pretend democracy in their organizations, the state and national policies are rigidly controlled by reactionaries.

The Farmers' Union convention authorized an organizing drive, and George Nelson of Milltown, Wisconsin, was appointed national organizer. Since then both Southern and Eastern Organizing Committees have been appointed to function under the National Board. Union leaders have expressed their desire to build a mass union.

In the United States there are about 6,800,000 farmers. About 3,000,000 are tenant farmers and sharecroppers. According to Secretary Wallace, a million small farm owners are so heavily mortgaged that they cannot escape the level of tenancy, and another million are being rapidly bogged down with debts and mortgages. This pictures the tasks that lie before us.

The rank-and-file farmer is anxious to organize, as is well demonstrated by the growth of farm unions in New York, Louisiana and Pennsylvania in the past two years. In spite of all Wall Street propaganda against the C.I.O. it has been flooded with requests from farmers for organization.

While the Farmers' Union is anxious to carry through an organizing campaign, it does not have sufficient finances and organizers to conduct a campaign of C.I.O. proportions. There are many ways of getting organization started and our Party should assist in doing this wherever possible.

In hundreds of unorganized farm communities there are progressive farmers ready and willing to do this work, once they get contact with the Farmers' Union and its program.

Around hundreds of industrial towns the labor movement can be encouraged to organize farmers in an alliance to protect their mutual interests.

Many small, independent farm unions and cooperatives need the assistance and benefits of a strong national organization. They should be encouraged to affiliate with the Farmers' Union and support the general movement for farm organization.

The reactionary community leaders, who loudly claim to be spokesmen

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for the farmers, but who act as stool pigeons for the banks and trusts, should be exposed and discredited. Their principal purpose is to prevent organization through threats of economic penalties (denial of credit, foreclosure of mortgages, etc.) against militant farmers who want to organize. These assistants of Wall Street must be prevented from stopping organization.

All steps taken now to get organization started and facilitate the growth of existing unions will lay the groundwork for a genuine mass organizing campaign. The Farmers' Union, or a coalition of it and other farm organizations, representing millions of farmers with a progressive program, must be the answer to the attacks of Wall Street on labor and farmers. Our Party's job is to give all possible assistance to the progressive forces to carry through this work in the shortest possible time.

MARKETS AND PRICES

One of the most serious problems facing farmers, as well as labor and consumers, is the ruthless monopoly control of farm markets and prices. The increased income of the agricultural population due to price increases and government subsidies under the A.A.A. benefited mainly the rich farmer. Labor's wage gains through the union drive have been cut down through higher consumer prices. While labor and farmers suffer from a rising cost of living, the trusts have been doubling and trebling their profits. Some studies of the Federal Trades Commission revealed so much about the methods and profits of the Trusts that they were considered too "hot" to be published.

Labor is the principal consumer of farm goods. Thus, labor's welfare directly affects the farmers' welfare. This is proved by national income statistics which show the farmers' share of national income increases or decreases in direct proportion to labor's share.

The trusts have maintained their profits by keeping labor and farmers divided. The experiences of the past teach us that a strong *farmer-labor-consumer alliance* is the only means of wringing exorbitant profits from the trusts to benefit the people.

Our Party must work to build a strong farmer-labor-consumer alliance to combat the trusts on both the economic and legislative fields. All progressive forces must be rallied to keep reactionary interests from side-tracking the anti-trust movement into harmless channels. One important factor in this struggle, in answer to the Wall Street howl against government spending, is that all direct concessions wrung from the trusts will reduce the need for federal crop control legislation. Farmers themselves, while needing various forms of government assistance, are opposed to federal crop control and strongly favor action to give them free markets and cost-of-production prices. This is the foundation of their strong anti-Wall Street and anti-trust sentiments. This is why direct action to gain farm benefits at the expense of the trusts will stuff anti-New Deal propaganda back down Wall Street's throat.

Gambling in farm products, monopoly dictation of farm prices, monopoly control of marketing, and so

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

forth, can be restricted to a great extent by legislation. Many of the present practices of the grain and cotton exchanges, as well as commission merchants and buyers, should be outlawed. There are other methods of fighting these monopolies that involve more direct action of farmers, labor and consumers, some of which we shall here indicate.

Storage and warehousing. One of the strongest holds the trusts have on farm products is through control of grain elevators, warehouses and storage plants. *Federal or state ownership and control of elevators and storage plants,* as well as financial assistance and protection for cooperative elevators and storage plants, will assist materially in government regulation of marketing, in maintaining an ever-normal granary, in providing loans on stored crops for small farmers, in regulating and pegging farm prices, and so forth. States like Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota should lead the way in the struggle for state ownership.

Milk. Many bitter battles have been fought against the milk trust. Strikes of farmers and consumers have won small concessions but legislation to curb the trust has always been twisted since stooges of the trust control it. The present situation in New York City may set an example for the rest of the country. Farmers and consumers are working together on a general plan of *municipal ownership and operation of milk processing plants and central distribution agencies.* Here, as in other anti-trust battles, the interests of the farmer, processing worker, milk driver, consumer and independent merchant must be considered to insure the broad united front of these groups against the trust. The sly propagandists of the trusts are wizards at dividing the ranks of their opponents, as illustrated by their work in getting farmers, dairy drivers and merchants to oppose Mayor LaGuardia's scheme of selling 9c milk to the poor to force down the price of milk. The demand for municipal ownership is practical and leaves little wind in the trust propagandist's sails. Farmers should be guaranteed the average cost-of-production price for their milk, municipal operation should be on a non-profit basis, workers should have union wages and conditions, and according to studies of the milk problem the consumers would pay lower prices.

General produce markets. Racketeers, commission merchants, hucksters and chain stores control the city produce markets, and in most cases the cities own the property on which they operate.

In a few of the small industrial towns in Alabama, the Farmers' Union has taken steps to control the local markets. Farmers and workers decided to support one another, labor patronized only union farmers, consumers lined up the merchants to patronize union farmers, and now the union is able to set prices. On a small scale this has worked fairly well.

In the cities, which are the principal markets, the *farm produce markets should be municipally owned and operated,* and the racketeers, commission merchants and hucksters should be eliminated. Farmers could get a better price for fresh vegetables and consumers could get them cheaper

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

through their local merchants if the cities were managing the markets.

Around this demand can be united the farmer, worker and consumer to achieve practical benefits at the expense of monopoly.

The advocates of consumer cooperatives to combat the trusts are choosing the longest road with the least chance of success. The poor people, who need the direct benefits of low prices the most, cannot afford to join cooperatives. The trusts can force the cooperatives into price wars just as soon as the cooperative movement threatens to control a large part of the market and in many cases destroy the cooperative. With the growth of the People's Front movement, municipal ownership could become a practical economic link between city and country and a quick, decisive blow to the trusts.

OTHER ANTI-TRUST ISSUES

Farmers in general complain about high railroad rates, and this issue was the foundation of the farmers' anti-trust fights fifty years ago. While the railroad magnates continue their cry of poverty, begging for further government subsidies and increases in rates, the taxpayers of the nation are sick and tired of financing the railroads, getting stuck with watered stocks, and watching railroad profits go to the bankers. This problem should be settled by *government ownership.*

The same holds true in regard to the electric power industry. When Ohio farmers chopped down private power company poles last year to stop a plot to disrupt their cooperative venture, they gave expression to the anti-trust sentiment that is predominant among them. The power trust was not interested in rural electrification until the T.V.A. and other government projects started distribution of cheap power in rural communities. President Roosevelt has called for the death of the holding companies. That, however, is not the end of the power fight. Extension of the T.V.A. program to the seven large river basins in the country, and supplying cheap power through municipal and state-owned plants are the answer.

Food processing monopolies present a particularly delicate problem. At present the processors beat down the farmers' price and the farmers pay field workers very low wages. The processing workers get considerably higher wages than field workers. Farmers and field workers can be organized to cooperate through their unions to force higher prices from the trusts, but the trusts can immediately prejudice processing workers and consumers against them through wage cuts and raising prices. This is particularly true of the most perishable goods which have to be handled quickly. Regardless of all complications one thing is clear, *there has to be a firm alliance of farm field workers, farmers and processing workers to oppose the food processing trusts.* Such an alliance, in working out tactics for gaining concessions from the trusts, can utilize pressure on the government for regulation of minimum wages for labor and cost-of-production prices for farmers. It is vitally important that small farmers be consulted where strikes of processing workers are concerned to prevent recurrence of events as those at Hershey, Pa.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Other fields of monopoly, such as fertilizer, farm machinery and so forth, that directly concern farmers will come under the anti-trust movement spotlight, too. In order to prevent conservative or pro-fascist elements from shunting the anti-trust fight into harmless channels, all possible forms of direct struggle for benefits at the expense of trust profits have to be developed.

While our Party supports the struggle to gain every possible concession from the trusts, we must at the same time increase our educational work to show the masses of people the only final answer to the trusts and monopoly capitalism—that of socialism.

OTHER FARM DEMANDS

Many other immediate problems face the great majority of farmers. Many of them are important in the immediate legislative and economic struggles now advancing.

Seed and feed loans are becoming an increasingly important issue for tenants and small farm owners, in that production credit is especially scarce during an economic recession. Sharecroppers and share-tenants are held in debt slavery through landlord control of production credit. The government has made an average of about $50,000,000 a year available for production loans through the Farm Credit Administration, since 1931, but that has been far from enough to meet the problem. The average small farmer cannot continue in production without a loan for seed, feed and fertilizer. The government should accept full responsibility for making production loans available to small farmers who need them and place a check on landlords who keep tenants in debt slavery and on banks and loan sharks who refuse production loans to drive small farmers from the land.

Mortgage moratoriums and relief are important now and will be increasingly important as the economic recession becomes worse. In some states moratorium laws are in effect. It is important that all farm owners be protected by moratorium laws until methods of refinancing farm mortgages through federal legislation are worked out.

Taxation is a heavy burden on the small farmer. Recent studies (referred to in *The Communist* for October, 1937) show the rate of taxation to be highest for small farmers, declining rapidly for larger farms. The homestead exemption for farms with a tax valuation up to $5,000, occupied by the owner, should be enacted in every state and existing homestead exemption laws should be amended upwards. The Granduated Land Tax should be fought for as a means of curbing land monopoly, and replacing county and state tax revenue lost through homestead exemption acts.

Farmers' collective bargaining agencies should be established to protect farmers from ruthless collection policies of creditors, from landlord domination of tenants, and for adjustment of debts farmers are unable to meet. The Holiday Association served this function for several years and saved thousands of farmers from loss of machinery and land. Official recognition of the farmers' right to collective bargaining and protection is needed, although this would not decrease the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

need for union vigilance in protecting the farmers' interests.

THE FARM BILL

Space does not permit a detailed analysis of the A.A.A. legislation now going through Congress. Farmers are strongly opposed to acreage reduction. The landlord interests are responsible for the crop reduction features and rigid control measures because they can reduce operating costs and benefit from higher prices and government subsidy. While Wall Street interests have been trying to capitalize on farmer opposition to the A.A.A. it must be sharply emphasized that Wall Street offers no alternative to the present program, other than a return to Republican methods that wreaked havoc among farmers in 1931. It must be emphasized that Wall Street interests not only oppose the A.A.A., but also mortgage relief, production loans, and any other federal aid.

We should work for amendments to the A.A.A. to benefit small farmers. We flatly oppose acreage reduction while millions of people starve for want of food, but until the progressive movement can convince the New Deal to drop this feature of the A.A.A. we must also demand that acreage reduction be enforced only on large farms, and not on family-sized farms. We oppose compulsory marketing quotas and penalties on crops sold in excess of quotas, especially on small farms. We propose limitation of benefit payments to a maximum of $5,000 to one person or farm. We propose a large increase in soil conservation work on family-sized farms and increased payments for this work, because it is on family-sized farms that erosion and declining fertility have caused greatest damage. We propose stricter control of prices, to peg farm prices at the average cost-of-production level through an ever-normal granary and crop loan program to regulate marketing, with provisions to protect consumers from retaliation by the trusts.

There are many other farm issues that will undoubtedly come up in joint legislative conferences between farmers and labor. The guiding principle for us must be that these demands are directed against the trusts and toward practical federal and state assistance to farmers.

It is decisively important now that our whole Party get into action in the farm field, in the cities by arousing labor and consumers to support farm demands and in the countryside by aiding the farmers' fight against the trusts, and thus build a strong farmer-labor-consumer alliance. It is important that our Party make its position clear on the issues facing farmers, and let the farmers understand the program of the Party. Our Party must increase membership among farmers and in rural communities, giving special attention to answering Wall Street propaganda and building the People's Front movement.

It is the duty of our Party to develop initiative, and render every practical assistance to the movement for mass farm organization and farmer-labor political action in the election campaign. Through these campaigns the People's Front movement for peace, democracy and security will be advanced, and labor can strengthen its friendship with its allies, the tillers of the soil.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE HEALTH STATUS OF AMERICAN WORKERS

BY HARRIET SILVERMAN

EVEN a major depression such as this country barely recovered from, only to be catapulted into a "recession," can produce its optimists. Because the death rate was slightly less for a time, there are those who have drawn the comfortable conclusion that the economic catastrophe was good for the health of the American people. Such a conclusion flies in the face of reason and fact.

Marx once described in his characteristic way one of the blind optimists of his time:

"Dr. Smith, during the cotton crisis caused by the American Civil War, was sent by the English government . . . to report on the sanitary conditions of the operatives. He reported that, from a hygienic point of view, and apart from the banishment of the operatives from the factory atmosphere, the crisis had several advantages. The women now had sufficient leisure to give their infants the breast, instead of poisoning them with 'Godfrey's cordial.' They had time to learn to cook. Unfortunately, the acquisition of this art occurred at a time when they had nothing to cook. . . . This crisis was also utilized to teach sewing to the daughters of the workmen in sewing schools. An American revolution and a universal crisis in order that the working girls, who spin for the whole world, might learn to sew!" (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 431, Kerr Edition.)

Health and Depression Studies of the United States Public Health Service has helped dispel the illusion of well-being:

". . . the downward trend of mortality rates for the prosperous elements of the population *masked* the conditions among the unemployed and the lower income groups. . . . While the death rate during the period 1929-32 declined in families with full-time employed wage-earners, it *increased 20 per cent in families with no employed members or only part-time earners.* Shocking as these facts are, revealing the highly disproportionate loss of life in our lower income homes, they are far from the whole picture." (Roche Report.)

These alarming findings merely bear out the previous study covering three-quarters of a million American families, three and a half million individuals, reported by the former Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, Josephine Roche:

". . . disabling illness among persons on relief is 68 per cent higher than among those in families with an annual income of $3,000 or over; the unemployed have twice the disabling illness that the employed have; the Works Progress Administration workers have a disabling illness rate 40 per cent above that of other employed persons; one in every twenty heads of families on relief is unemployed because of disability, while only one in 250 heads of families in the higher income groups is unemployed because of disability."

At the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association on

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

October 5, 1937, Josephine Roche also declared:

"Fifty years ago 94 per cent of all mortality from disease was from *acute* illness, chiefly infections; today, 75 per cent of all mortality from disease is from *chronic* illness. Ten diseases take this toll of three out of four of our deaths. Listed according to the death rates which they are responsible for, they are: heart disease, cancer, pneumonia, influenza, cerebral hemorrhage, nephritis, tuberculosis, diabetes, diarrhea and enteritis, appendicitis and syphilis. *Where do they strike most often and hardest? In the homes of the poor,* of that one-third of our people, ill-fel, ill-housed, ill-clothed. That phrase must be amended by adding, 'ill-cared-for, or not cared for at all, in sickness and death.'" (Emphasis ours—H.S.)

The death rate of between 40,000,000 and 50,000,000 Americans with incomes of less than $1,000 a year, from the ten major diseases that cause three out of every four deaths in the U.S., *is twice that of the rest of the population.* This estimate was also based upon a federal survey of 750,000 families in the U.S.A. The findings incontestably prove that *the death rates rise steadily as income goes down.*

The death rate among Negro workers has consistently been much higher than among whites since the Civil War. The mortality rates for the doubly exploited Negro masses, men, women and particularly children, have been appalling. Tuberculosis and heart disease exact the greatest toll. Of 1,032 Negro industrial workers examined in Cincinnati in 1931, 55.6 per cent of the men had a heart condition unknown to them. One need look no further for explanations as to why so few Negro workers live to reach old age! Last April the American Foundation issued an extensive two-volume report: *American Medicine—Expert Testimony Out of Court,* describing conditions in a cross section of the country. The evidenced mass misery is more disastrous than anything yet disclosed.

Reactions to this survey have already came from conservative sources. On the basis of the American Foundation report, 430 leading physicians, many of whom are at the top of the profession, in daily contact with the sick, the suffering, the needy, have been moved to identify themselves with the acute distress of the masses. Others have begun to revolt against their own insecurity, because the poor cannot pay doctors. The hierarchy of the medical profession, notably the American Medical Association, is opposed to the principles for which the 430 insurgents have declared themselves, *viz:*

"1. That the health of the people is a direct concern of the government.

"2. That a national public health policy directed toward all groups of the population should be formulated.

"3. That the problem of economic need and the problem of providing adequate medical care are not identical and may require different approaches to their solution."

We can heartily agree with these principles. Their application, however, still remains a matter of speculation.

The data in this report are buttressed with further statistics released by the American Foundation.

Let us examine the American Foundation's report:

1. *Georgia:*

"Last year there were more than 800 deaths in Georgia without an attending physician, while thousands of people suffering

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with typhoid fever, malaria, tuberculosis, cancer, appendicitis, etc., were unable to get a doctor, or hospital attention:

2. *South Dakota:*

"Last year there was not enough raised on many farms to feed one horse or cow and the price of feed was so high that one had to sign up to pay in the future. . . . There is hardly a person in this county with rich soil, who at present is able to go to a hospital for attendance."

3. *Ohio:* A pediatrician in a city in Ohio:

"The large number of our people never come in contact with medical care except upon entering or departing this life."

4. *New York:* A professor of Clinical Medicine in New York City, member of the Association of American Physicians, calls attention to the fact that:

"A study conducted in New York City some years ago concluded that about 80 per cent of the population was unable to secure medical service when they became ill."

5. An Associate Professor in the Harvard Medical School concludes:

"The future structure of medical institutions will depend greatly on the character of the future political and economic institutions of the country. Medicine, in the broad sense, deals with the mental and physical health of the population, hence medicine is particularly closely related to other institutions dealing with human relations."

Modern science has lengthened the span of life by almost twenty years. Yet in the United States the death rate mounts steadily. Public hospitals are overcrowded and understaffed. Sick people are uncared for and dying, while 65 per cent of the private institution beds are unused. The undermining of children and youth through hunger and malnutrition is nationwide, thus condemning the next generation before it has even had its start. Thirty to 50 per cent of the recruits for the last World War were rejected as unfit. Motivated by blind greed, monopoly capitalism continues to destroy the flesh and blood of our generation with a ferocity that is barbaric.

Long hours, low wages, unsafe working conditions, unemployment, family budgets that are below subsistance levels, slum housing—all these are basic considerations. The minimum family budget, prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, calls for scales ranging from $1,825 for New York, to $2,169 for San Francisco. These budgets today are not sufficient for the minimum requirements of "health and decency." They do not allow for doctors, medicine, dental care or other necessities. The steadily rising cost of living places such essentials in the class of luxuries.

In 1930, the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection reported at least 6,000,000 undernourished children in the United States. In 1935, in New York City, the highest proportion of starving children were found in Harlem—23.8 per cent as against the citywide average of 13.4 per cent in 1929.

The International Labor Office (Workers' Nutrition and Social Policy), declares:

". . . Inadequate and insufficient nourishment among workers—its primary and most important cause is inability to buy the right kind of foods, especially protective foods, in the necessary quantities. Low income or lack of purchasing power is thus the root cause

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the inadequate nutrition of large numbers of workers and their families."

A paramount question now needs to be asked: What is happening to the babies in this rich America, if malnourishment is so widespread? The death rate among babies has been called the most sensitive index of the people's health:

". . . More than twenty years ago, Children's Bureau studies revealed the fact that the babies of the poor died at a notably higher rate than the babies in comfortable circumstances. While the use of infant welfare services in the last decade has resulted in a marked reduction in the infant mortality rate, *large areas still exist in which the mortality of infants of the poor is of the order of rates observed over twenty years ago.* It is highly significant that the causes of infant deaths, which showed the greatest decreases in the past forty years, are the ones which show the *largest* excess in infant mortality among the low income group. *The diseases which kill the babies of the poor in greater excess are the very ones in which greatest general decrease in infant mortality has taken place.*" (Cited—Roche Reports. Emphasis mine—H.S.)

CHILD EXPLOITATION

The National Child Labor Committee, in November, reported a continued widespread exploitation of children in two industries surveyed by the committee this summer and fall. The shrimp industry of the Southern Gulf states, particularly Texas and Louisiana, and the tiff mines of Missouri were studied. The committee declares:

". . . that the tiff mine area of Missouri is a sore spot in the industrial life of the U.S. Poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, child labor, with children from six or seven years up working regularly in the tiff diggings; child marriages; malnutrition and disease characterize this section of Missouri, where existence is dependent upon and dominated by the tiff mine industry."

"Tiff" is a common name for barite. It comes out of the earth in chunks, sometimes small, sometimes weighing many pounds. It is used as an adulterant in the manufacture of paints, rubber goods, paper products, floor coverings, etc. Tiff digging is paid for on the tonnage basis. The pick and shovel require strength; yet most of the children in the tiff mines went to work before they were ten years of age, working anywhere from seven to ten hours a day, in all kinds of weather.

The committee declares further:

"The average income per child worker was $2.87 per week or 7½c an hour. Sixty-six of the children did not keep a single cent of their earnings for themselves; all had to go into the family budget. Of the twenty who did have a part of their earnings, seventeen used it to buy clothing, leaving only three who had any money to satisfy their childish desires. . . . The average family income per child worker, small as it is, looms large when one considers that the average weekly income per family from all sources—work in tiff, relief, everything—is $10.97, or $1.74 per person. . . . It is either the diggings or starvation!"

More than one hundred years ago, in the agitation for the passage of the English Factory Acts, one finds no more horrible example of savage ruthlessness toward childhood. Then, children and whole families were hired outright, in England, as they were here in the mines and factories of Pennsylvania. Today, in the tiff mines, children are "employed" under the guise of "working with their parents." By this method, Missouri evades the Child Labor Amendment.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Here are children who never have any milk; families living in miserable two-room shacks "unfit for human habitation," without a privy, sleeping on floors and bunks, illiterate—no money for doctors—people starving in a rich land. The battle of the century has only begun to wipe this infamy off the map of the United States.

Florence Kelly, pioneer for child rights, was wont to call the twenty-year struggle for the Child Labor Amendment "inching" along. The lynch-filibustering clique of Liberty Leaguers in the present session of Congress will find satisfaction in this tempo. The progressive, democratic line-up on this issue will need to muster all its *united* strength to defeat them in this session, in a showdown fight to pass the Federal Child Labor Amendment—not twenty years hence—but this year.

Special provisions and regulations for the protection of women and young workers—from sixteen to twenty-one—in industry, are sorely needed. Young workers under eighteen take the brunt of the risks in dangerous trades. Likewise, women, particularly of child-bearing age, are exposed to industrial poisons which exact a greater toll among them because of special susceptibility.

There are a few states which already provide special measures for young workers in industry, such as triple compensation for minors in Wisconsin. But two-thirds of the states at least have no regulation whatever of the employment in dangerous occupations of sixteen and seventeen-year-old boys and girls. It is estimated that almost 50,000 boys and girls under eighteen years of age are killed or maimed in industrial accidents annually.

Disastrous practices such as have been described still do not convey the whole story. The octopus of greed, the industrial oligarchy of "sixty families" ruling America today adds to the record, exacting its victims in industry.

OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES

Deep down in the bowels of the earth, miners face death for lack of necessary and sufficient safeguards. Building the tunnels under the rivers, heroes of labor, cynically called "sandhogs," risk life every moment from extremes of air pressure.

With indicting eloquence, Marx describes how trades and occupations undermine workers' health, as though he were inspecting our industries today:

> "We shall here merely allude to the material conditions under which factory labor is carried on. Every organ of sense is injured in an equal degree by artificial elevation of the temperature, by the dust-laden atmosphere, by the deafening noise, not to mention danger to life and limb among the thickly-crowded machinery, which, with the regularity of the seasons, issues its list of the killed and wounded in the industrial battle." (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 465.)

The 74th Congress of the United States was commissioned, in January, 1936, through H.R. 449, to set up a Board of Inquiry into conditions at Gauley Bridge, W. Va., where 460 tunnel workers employed by a subsidiary of the Union Carbide & Carbon Co. had died from silicosis contracted while digging the tunnel. One hundred and sixty-nine other workers were buried in a field at Summerville,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

W. Va., "with cornstalks as their only gravestones, and with no other means of identification." Fifteen hundred are now suffering from silicosis, contracted while employed in the construction of the tunnel. (Source: Hearings before a Sub-Committee of the "Committee on Labor," House of Representatives—H.J. Reso. 449—Jan. 6, 1936—74th Cong.—2nd Session.)

The testimony before Congress revealed, first, that the simplest safeguards for the workers were refused. A worker asked the foreman if he could use a little water on the drill, when the "bit got hung up,"—the answer was, "Hell, no!"

Dry dust, no masks or respirators, no safety devices, working with stone that had 99 per cent silica dust, men died like flies. Whole families have been left destitute, others are still coughing their lives away waiting only for death. Wages were cut from 50 cents an hour to 40 cents, to 30 cents, and then to 25 cents for a ten-hour day! Living conditions of the men were as bad as their working conditions.

The Congressional Board of Inquiry testimony revealed:

> "The majority of the men working on the tunnel when the first work started were colored men. . . . They buried them like they were burying hogs—putting two or three of them in a hole. The men were buried in what they got killed or died in. They were docked each week 75c by the company doctor, who never came to see them . . . and paid 25c a week more than the white man. . . . The tunnel must be finished quick . . . quick . . . quick . . . we want our profits; that was all that interested the company."

This is what Engels meant when he spoke of "social murder."

From a Public Health Report of 1863 to the English Parliament, Karl Marx cites the condition of the potters, who represented a "degenerated population" as a result of the lead used in this industry. The English report concludes with the hope that: "a manufacture which has assumed so prominent a place in the whole world will not be subject to the remark that its great success is accomplished with the physical deterioration, widespread bodily suffering, and early death of the work people." Yet today lead poisoning remains one of the most serious hazards of American industry in no less than 150 occupations, chiefly painting and pottery, while over a million workers are affected by the menace of silica dust.

Suffering workers have turned in desperation to the Workmen's Compensation laws for some assistance. Here we find that in many states the combined opposition of powerful employing interests and the insurance companies has made a travesty of these laws. The so-called liberal amendment, for instance, passed in New York in 1935, made specifically to cover silicosis, actually succeeds in denying compensation to the workers: first, by making a worker wait until the disease has made such inroads that he is either incapacitated or dead; second, by denying him the right to sue. In foundries, building, highway construction, potteries, glassware, stone products, metal mining, and other basic industries, the silica hazard is present. Through the conspiracy of the law and corporation doctors, tens of thousands of workers are robbed of their due rights. The Empire State, New York, awarded exactly six claims for silicosis during

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the first full year of the operation of the law! On the face of it there is something wrong. New York has had an unprecedented period of tunnel construction, bridge building and road improvement.

Similarly, throughout the country, under P.W.A., in the construction of Boulder Dam and other projects, many thousands of workers have been exposed to rock dust. Yet there is little mention of the effect of construction on "sandhogs," on excavators, or caisson workers. The proposal made some time ago at a silicosis conference, by labor representatives, for an exclusive state insurance fund as a means of guaranteeing protection, substantial compensation benefits and adequate medical care to all victims of the disease, should prove a rallying call to battle on the part of organized labor. State funds for this purpose should be enlarged by federal subsidy. Simultaneously with this, the most insistent demands must be raised for maximum safeguards and preventive measures in all dusty trades.

The control of occupational disease and accidents is of itself a major problem for the workers of America.

In an article dealing with "Mass Unemployment in the Capitalist Countries and the Task of the Trade Unions," A. Lozovsky stresses the significance of other highly important factors:

> "In consequence of the monstrous intensification of labor, an increase of trauma [accidents and occupational diseases] is to be observed in industry, an increase in occupational diseases, and the rapid physical exhaustion of the workers. And so, in capitalist conditions, the rationalization of industry becomes the curse of the working class. Rationalization makes the factory a hell for the employed worker. But even this hell is something which the worker, thrown out of industry and doomed to forced idleness, starvation and physical degeneration, can only dream of." (*The Communist International*, Sept., 1937, p. 624.)

New and insidious poisons, such as benzol and loony gas (tetra-ethyl lead), are flooding American industry.

The du Ponts have their Haskell laboratory, and bought-and-paid-for corporation doctors spread falsehoods about the "harmlessness" of these virulent poisons. Careful analysis of industrial processes in the United States has, however, produced a list of no less than 700 hazardous occupations. For industrial workers this means that the death rates are two and three times as high as in non-industrial groups during the active working years of life. Estimates of the employers' organization, the National Safety Council, state:

> "There were 18,000 deaths caused by occupational accidents in the United States in 1936. This is an increase of 2,000 over 1934, when at least 16,000 were killed in industrial accidents.
>
> "In addition to these fatal accidents, about 70,000 resulted in permanent disability and 1,460,000 in temporary disability in the one year—1936."

Yet 95 per cent of industrial accidents are preventable.

It was estimated in the Report to the President of the Committee on Economic Security (1935) that only about half the large industrial establishments in the United States and Canada have adequate medical or sanitary service.

Undoubtedly, advances have been made in the way of protective legislation. The N.R.A. Codes were a step

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the direction of regulation. Workmen's Compensation Laws are of benefit to the workers. Nevertheless, the hostility of the exploiting class is plainly evident in forty-six of the forty-eight states which now have such statutes. Only twelve states and four jurisdictions grant compensation for diseases that are directly caused by the occupation. In the majority of states, occupational diseases are excluded expressly or by court interpretation. The "waiting" time needs to be reduced generally and benefits increased. New York recently passed a law which includes all occupational diseases. The victory of this must be credited to the labor unions which carried on a continuous campaign for a blanket bill such as was outlined some years ago by the Workers' Health Bureau as the only desirable measure. During the existence of this bureau, organized on the basis of trade union affiliations, a national health program was formulated, to control trade hazards. Through trade union agreements, and legislative action, notable gains were made in many trades, with resulting improvements in working conditions, liberalizing the Workmen's Compensation Laws, reducing the accident risk, and instituting new codes and standards.

Several of the more powerful unions have instituted some form of medical service over a period of years, among them the I.L.G.W.U., the printers, the painters, and more recently the Auto Workers Union (C.I.O.) in Detroit, which has undertaken a very extensive plan of physical examinations to curb industrial disease. These undertakings open the way for a more inclusive approach, first, because many unions together can carry through a broader, more comprehensive health program, and, second, the joint effort would result in greater legislative gains through this combined pressure and organized influence.

Such a movement, on a People's Front basis, would prove invaluable to the unions now, in attacking these issues.

THE CRISIS IN PUBLIC HEALTH

Overwhelming evidence confronts us on all sides that a health crisis exists. In September, 1937, Dr. Thomas Parran, Surgeon General of the U. S. Health Service, summarized the situation in a graphic article, in *The New York Times:*

> "I don't think that anyone will deny that medical service is a necessity of life, and it is only a small step from that to the fact that such service may be made available by the community to those in need.... But not until the enactment of social security legislation was there an adequate recognition on the part of the federal government of its share of the responsibilities in health matters.
>
> "There are sound scientific, social and economic reasons for more aggressive attention to the public health. Yet there are those who would limit Public Health Service to sanitation, quarantine and the care of the insane and indigent sick. To accept this view is to ignore the inherent responsibility of government. I think we have reached a stage in our civilization when we must accept as a major premise that our citizens should have an equal opportunity for health as an inherent right, co-equal with the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

No one can fail to recognize in this declaration a new and progressive approach.

The United States Public Health Service, however, has never been equal to its task. Organized in 1789 by an

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Act of Congress, signed by President John Adams, the service was concerned with the relief of sick and disabled seamen. From the wages of seamen on merchant ships, 20 cents a month was deducted for building hospitals in the chief ports. This was and remains the only attempt at a system of health insurance in the United States. As for the U. S. Public Health Service, after 139 years as an institution of government it is powerless to do more than make recommendations, except in the control of epidemics, contagious diseases, etc., despite its many valuable reports and extensive research in other related fields.

Prevention of disease, today the last consideration, must come first. A drastic change of policy on the part of the national administration is imperative. Sick and dying people cannot wait to "inch" their way to the necessities of life, through long drawn-out battles in Congress and state legislatures. The billions now spent in preparation for future wars can and should be made immediately available to save lives—to institute and carry through a program that will see the people well-housed, well-clad, well-nourished, well-guarded against avoidable sickness and well-cared for when illness strikes, from infancy to old age. These are minimum demands for a democracy.

The American Medical Association has just published its latest resolution recommending committees to "outline the necessary procedures for making further studies and reports of the prevailing need for medical and preventive services." The A.M.A. is satisfied to wait for local societies, boards of health, etc., as well as county committees, to consider these studies, and postpone action. Such a resolution is a poor concession to the American Foundation report. It represents something of a victory for the 430 insurgent physicians. It is to the credit of the minority groups of physicians in various county sections of the A.M.A. who have championed a progressive policy. But it is no solution for the masses. The libraries are bursting with studies! Medical facilities are at hand. Physicians are ready. Vigorous action could immediately make available adequate care to the people who need this the most. It will take a real struggle against the medical hierarchy, no less than against the 1 per cent which controls 59 per cent of the country's wealth, to gain even the minimum objectives indicated. But an impatient people is on the march. Combined with the struggle for better working standards, higher wages and shorter hours, this new movement for the defense of the people's health will win adherents from all walks of life.

In an enlightened age, the building of strong, healthy people, above all, the *prevention* of disease, should be a primary responsibility of government. The working population of the Soviet Union benefits by the most advanced system of public health in the world, enjoying this as the fruit of its brave, new, social order. Within a short span of time, conspicuous advances have been made in this direction in the U.S.S.R., along with raising the economic and cultural status of 170,000,000 people. This in a country that has not been occupied with the peaceful pursuits as we have been

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in our much flaunted "democracy." A government that has grappled with war, intervention, civil war and famine—a country that has had to strain all its energies and resources to conquer industrialization, to overcome a backward, bankrupt economy. A land that has had to vanquish its enemies without and within has nevertheless found the solution to this problem also. Such phenomenal achievement flows from the fact that the Soviet Union regards the health and cultural progress of the people its paramount purpose, the first charge on government. The health program is an integral part of the economic program.

HEALTH INSURANCE THE FIRST STEP

The first plank in a program for which we have only just begun to fight should be a *compulsory national health insurance bill.* But if we are not to be sidetracked again by another twenty years of agitation, this movement for health insurance must be launched on a national scale. The cost for health insurance must be borne by the monopolies and trusts, by the higher income brackets, by the employers, and by government subsidy. Workers must be assured participation in the administration of such an act. Far from being a revolutionary demand, this would merely be the first step in catching up with progress. The U. S. has lagged far behind European countries, in both unemployment relief systems, as well as health protection.

Progressive-minded people of all shades of opinion are ripe for leadership in this direction, for here is a life-and-death issue.

A health insurance campaign would win supporters everywhere among the masses; for who is not affected? There is a steadily growing awareness that social security has only taken the first step. The people are ready to fight for a program which includes pre-natal, child care and maternity insurance and birth control clinics. They need and will demand medical care for children in the schools, periodic medical examinations, proper diagnostic service, dental care, as well as sickness and old age pensions. Workers will struggle for elimination of industrial diseases and accidents, for greater benefits under the compensation law; the inclusion of domestic and other workers now excluded, for venereal disease clinics and education to stamp out syphilis. The youth will demand and is already demanding more play space, club-rooms, swimming pools, in addition to *jobs,* and *education.* Adequate hospital facilities, convalescent care and sanatoria, as well as municipal markets, improved pure food and drug laws, modern low-cost housing, the milk yardstick, find an immediate response. For many of these essentials that are part and parcel of the question of health for the masses, consumers' organizations, church bodies, women's groups, youth and fraternal societies are already in motion. A broad, elastic movement for health insurance and a comprehensive health program such as is indicated would unquestionably accelerate this struggle, extend it further and wider than ever before.

There is ferment, not only among the masses, but in the medical profession as well. Many are today seeking a solution through socialized

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

medicine. This trend needs directing into what logically belongs in a People's Front program. There is no more appropriate moment than the present. The Roosevelt administration must recognize the health demands of the people as part of the progressive mandate delivered by the nation in the last elections. The demand for health insurance must be laid at the door of the 75th Congress. The trade unions are in a key position to take the initiative here. Labor has made sweeping advances, as never before. Its collective strength promises to emerge as a challenging force through a crystallizing national Farmer-Labor Party. Here is a power to be reckoned with, not ignored. The A. F. of L. has for many years sponsored health measures. The C.I.O. at its October conference formulated a broad policy, including cash benefits to sick and injured workers. The American Labor Party has similarly declared itself.

A united labor movement can wrest health concessions from the government, in keeping with its democratic utterances. With the People's Front victory in France came the decree shortening the working day, granting vacations with pay, providing protection in basic industries and many other new benefits. This was combined with the struggle to tax big capital. The struggle for these gains went on simultaneously with the struggle against fascist reaction.

We have much to learn from the experiences of the unifying force of the People's Front in France, particularly in relation to the further rapid increase in unemployment. As Lozovsky so aptly puts it:

> "We can only free the unemployed of fascist influences and unmask fascist demagogy if we energetically and stubbornly defend the elementary interests of the unemployed. Increased unemployed benefits; reduction and postponement of rents, dining rooms, free training for the children of the unemployed, free *medical attention* and many other practical questions that interest and cause anxiety to the unemployed worker and his family, should occupy the center of the attention of the proletarian organizations." (*The Communist International,* Sept., 1937, p. 629.)

Health and physical well-being are denied to the vast majority of the toilers of this country. This has now reached a critical stage. The issue concerns city folks as well as farmers, young and old. It strikes hardest at the most poverty-stricken men, women and children, exacting the greatest of all sacrifices, premature death, sickness, long-drawn-out suffering. The challenge of such alarming mass misery must thunder in the ears of all those whom the people have elected to Congress, of all those who sit in state and municipal legislatures. The struggle to win health insurance, as the first step toward a broad health program, will galvanize and help build the People's Front as a bulwark to defeat reaction. The People's Front in formation has as one of its important tasks the sounding of the call to action for all these demands that mean a long and better life for labor, for the entire American people. The democratic forces of this great country will heed this call and rally to its banner.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOK REVIEWS

HISTORIC ROOTS OF THE NEGRO LIBERATION MOVEMENT

Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy, by James S. Allen, International Publishers, New York, 256 pp., $1.25.

When in 1928, the Communist Party of the United States formulated a clear-cut program on the Negro question, based on the teachings of Lenin as applied to American social life, there ensued a period of polemics on the issue. Efforts to refute the Leninist analysis were made by the Lovestoneites, who were expelled from the Communist Party a year later. Their "man of letters," Will Herberg, seeking to disprove the concept of the Negroes as an oppressed nation, a political entity, portrayed the Negroes during the Reconstruction period as having been graciously freed by humanitarian Northerners, Abolitionists, and politically conscious capitalists. It was only necessary, according to his thesis, that Negroes recognize their common interests with the white working class. For the white workers, the Negroes were labeled a "subject caste," a possible "reserve of reaction," which would have to be neutralized rather than won.

Basing himself on real events of the Reconstruction period, James S. Allen answered Herberg in a polemical article published in *The Communist* for February, 1933, titled: "Prologue to Negro Liberation." Therein Allen laid the basis for his present book. The article itself was important in that it stimulated a stock-taking of material available to the working class on Reconstruction. It helped to neutralize the harmful influence of that part of Simons' *Social Forces in American History* that deals with the Negroes and Reconstruction. Simons presented a Social-Democratic position on the Negroes and might be called—at least on the Negro question—the spiritual ancestor of the Lovestoneites.

The book under review is an enlargement of that polemical article, integrating twentieth century revolutionists and their perspectives with the rich traditions of Americanism.

By way of introduction, Allen shows that what appeared as a "war between Northern and Southern states" was, in reality, a revolution: "as fundamental a social revolution as it would have been if the slave system were uniformly spread throughout the country and the middle class, evolved in the course of commercial and capitalist development, had risen to take power." (P. 19.)

The revolutionary character of the war was not apparent to the federal leaders for the first two years of the war. These were two costly years of "constitutional warfare." The contradictions within the federal front were such that they hampered a clear revolutionary war program. The composition of this front was the manufacturing interests, composing the Left; the frontier and city middle classes—represented by Lincoln—composing the Center; and the city commercial classes, bankers, and financiers, composing the Right.

The radical Republican Congressman, Thaddeus Stevens, as Allen points out, gave the full-voiced revolutionary tone to the parliamentary debates. Only his voice, representing the more revolutionary wing of the bourgeois democrats, could be heard above the din of legalistic and constitutional confusion.

Eventually the revolutionary character of the struggle became apparent and, from "burying their noses in law books" to find justification for their compromise slogan, "Save the Union," the middle classes, led by Lincoln, hesitantly adopted the revolutionary slogan, "Negro emancipation!"

The pressure of the Negroes and the radi-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cal bourgeoisie was effective in this change of policy.

If American revolutionaries and progressives want a source, the raw seed, of the present-day Communist position on the Negro question, let them listen to Thad Stevens answering the compromisers of the revolution who feared slave insurrections:

"What puerile inconsistency! Which is more to be abhorred—a rebellion of slaves challenging their masters, or a rebellion of free men [slaveholders] fighting to murder the nation?" (P. 23.)

And further, referring to the need for arming the slaves:

"Those, who now furnish the means of war but who are the natural enemies of the slaveholders, must be made our allies."

Although Stevens' slogans were purely bourgeois slogans, they apply with a slight revision, with equal force today to the tasks of the working class. In developing those slogans in accordance with the higher stage of struggle today, the working class can proudly claim its heritage of this historically revolutionary spirit and zeal of the American bourgeois-democratic revolutionaries.

American followers of Karl Marx during the Civil War—Weydemeyer and Sylvis—recruited men for the Northern Army, and themselves served actively in it, stimulated by Engels' summary of the European revolutions which served as a guide to the more politically developed working class leaders. They were able to see that there could be no independent, nationwide working class movement until the country had been unified on the basis of an industrial economy. This unification was predicated upon the abolition of slavery.

Those schematic labor historians who see the Civil War and Reconstruction as a period in which only capitalists made great gains, negating the stake the workers had in it, only shut off the progressive sections of the labor movement from its historical past and the tasks flowing from it. Such misappraisals of history are the basis for much of the sectarianism evidenced in Left-wing labor circles.

The military defeat of the slaveholders' regime heralded a new and higher phase of the revolution. How was democracy to function in the cotton belt? What class was to take power?

Having no city middle classes, no freeholders to speak of, no proletariat, and no developed industry—the two dynamic classes confronting each other in the slaveholders' domain were the ex-slaves and the former slaveholders. Therefore, writes Allen:

"If this was to be a people's revolution, they [the freedmen] would have to be the core of it; if democracy was to be established they would be its chief bearers."

This conclusion was backed by the actions of the armed Negroes—confiscating deserted plantations, burning the hated auction blocks, disarming former rebels and their sympathizers. The "foreboding, menacing" black army gave a ready answer to the complex question facing the struggle for democracy in the South. With "rough, calloused hand . . . the ex-slave brushed aside the polished lumber of the aristocracy." (P. 32.)

But this tide of revolutionary fervor, ecstatic in its sweep and spirit, went tragically unanswered and unguided. Again "the bourgeoisie attempted to don the revolution in a constitutional toga" and ". . . tripped constantly in the folds of the ill-fitting garment."

Seizing on the "States Rights" slogan, President Johnson "reconstructed" the Southern states by temporarily restoring the slavocracy to power. The Southern middle classes, which he represented, shied from the growing power of the Northern capitalists and fled to the decadent bourbons. An independent working class movement, comments Allen, might have presented Johnson's class with another alternative. He infers that the alternative would have been an alliance with labor against both Northern and Southern oligarchies. But it might have been that a developed working class movement would have curbed the rapacious capitalists and held the middle classes in the progressive front. Lack of further discussion of this point by the author is an omission of an aspect of the question that merits fuller development.

Johnson's ignominious "Presidential Reconstruction" (1865-67) did not defeat or still the progressive opposition. Abolitionists and bourgeois democrats now attacked "Restoration" with the same zeal with which they

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had hitherto attacked chattel slavery. It is interesting to note that "Restoration" was not fought on the basis of abstract principles. Land *to* the freedmen and *from* the slaveholders, as the basis of spreading democracy to the cotton belt, was the foremost issue. Stevens called for a revolutionary reconstruction program which would "exile the aristocracy." It must be said to the undying honor of Stevens and Sumner that, though in the very heat of the struggle, without a formal revolutionary education, they were consistent fighters for the revolutionary aims of their class and gave a clear perspective to the progressive front of their day (and the working class of our day). What proper evaluation, indeed, can such men receive at the hands of the renegade anti-Leninist "historians" Herberg, Wolfe, et al?

Not once did the bourgeois radicals conclude that the Negroes were oppressed and deprived of rights because of their race and color. They know that Negro rights and democracy were imperiled because the plantations were allowed to remain in the hands of the aristocrats. And they fought for confiscation.

But wise Mr. Herberg, detractor of Leninism-Stalinism, sees the Negro in the United States as "a member of a *subject caste* . . . doomed to an inferior position because of his birth, his race." Herberg might, by his distorted logic, have added that the Southern white workers suffer lower living standards and wage differentials because of their birth and drawl.

The Negroes did not try to change their race. As Allen well points out, they, without benefit of parliament, were writing *land laws* with gun, stick, and measuring rope; they were placing, with these crude implements, the slogan "Confiscation of Rebel Estates" squarely on the government's program. But bourgeois legalism again turned from a progressive slogan to parliamentary and "constitutional" fol-de-rol.

Although 800,000 acres were taken over by the Freedmen's Bureau, if distributed, they would not give more than cabin space to the 4,000,000 landless peasants. Much of the land was sold to Northern interests, government officials, and, in some cases, to former slaveholders. Sharecropping and contract labor were instituted, with labor relations supervised, ironically enough, by the Freedmen's Bureau. It was with such devious reforms that the road to counter-revolution was paved. Herein lay the germ of "Reconciliation" between North and South, the subsequent betrayal of the Negroes, and the desertion of democracy.

In sharp contrast to these land reforms was the action of General Sherman in granting possession of the Sea Islands to a Negro Refugee army. This order, notes Allen, "turned the Sea Islands into the most advanced outpost of the revolution." (P. 50.) The reason, however, for its becoming this outpost is not given by Allen. Was it due to the high level of struggle in South Carolina about which he writes later? Or was it due to a political difference between the War Department and the Executive? Such an act could not have grown out of the momentary pressure of the refugees. The omission leaves unanswered questions bound to arise in the mind of the reader at this point. There should also have been, one feels, a fuller study and explanation of the reason for the high level of revolutionary development in South Carolina.

Later, when the attempt was made to dislodge the Negroes from the islands, the invading soldiers met an organized community, already feeling the results of land ownership. The Negroes had a firmer platform on which to stand than did those who had to take the offensive for obtaining land.

Allen describes the struggle of the Negroes against the Black Codes and Johnson's Reconstruction. Freedmen's conventions were held in various Southern states. The demands put forth by these conventions, while still limited to bourgeois rights, were, nevertheless, democratic rights as applied concretely to the Negroes. Reading an account of these conventions, one is impressed at the similarity of many of the slogans to the progressive Negro and labor slogans of today:

1. Free labor.

2. Right to a fair trial, vote and to hold office.

3. Land confiscation and Negro land ownership.

4. Free public schools.

The land demands of the South Carolina Negroes were most clearly formulated. The land demand for breakup and sale of planta-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions was directed at both Northern speculators and ex-slaveholders.

Far from following the Northern capitalists blindly, Allen explains, the Negroes proved themselves by those events "a vital force capable of exerting independent pressure for the attainment of their demands." (P. 78.)

The industrial bourgeoisie, having grown up swiftly during the Civil War, wished to consolidate its political power. The immediate step toward this consolidation was a revolutionary course. In one stroke Johnson's scheme for restoration was upset. Congress took the center of the stage in the drama of reconstruction. There followed swiftly: the Committee on Reconstruction ("which became, in effect, the supreme council of the revolution"), the Civil Rights Bill, the Freedmen's Bureau Bill, and the 14th Amendment. The fraudulent "corporation rights" joker placed in the Amendment was the logical expression of a capitalist class belatedly ascending to power—therefore, with one eye on the plantation owner and the other guarding bulging pocketbooks, they pressed to guarantee "due process" for the growing corporations. But even with these limitations, the bourgeoisie opened "a revolutionary cycle as grandiose as any in American history." (P. 88.)

It "adopted a method of armed dictatorship against reaction and assured itself a mass base in the South by disfranchising the leaders of counter-revolution and extending suffrage to the Negro."

The discussion of the role played by the Union League clubs as mobilizing centers in the struggle against reaction is an interesting section of the book. These formed the mass bulwark against counter-revolution. The mechanics of the democratic processes of the time are explained here; and one gets a glimpse of a glorious period which, for the most part, is buried in obscure libraries or is shamefully distorted by white ruling class apologists and Negrophobes.

While the bourgeoisie was thus consolidating its political rule, the working class was growing, and beginning the eight-hour day movement. Already the abolition of slavery was fulfilling the prophecy of Marx and Engels—labor was developing as an independent class movement. The relations of this movement with Reconstruction and the Negro, as analyzed by Allen, have some pertinent lessons for the working class today.

Beset on the one hand by reformism and on the other by sectarianism, the newly-emerged working class could not master the problems in connection with the Negro, which it had inherited from the bourgeoisie. It was isolated from the Negro people because of this, although fruitful contacts were made with Negro labor leaders.

The early Marxists made sincere efforts to effect a realistic approach; but they, too, soon foundered on the rocks of reformism. A contributing factor was the fact that the Negro working class was not developed enough to act as the cementing element between the Negro people and the working class as a whole. Such a development came only in comparatively recent times.

The Amnesty Bill, though resisted by the Left, was soon passed, removing political disability from the former Confederates. This Bill was a gracious blank check upon the face of which the ex-slaveholders wrote in Negro blood and tears the word—*Restoration.*

How the Southern aristocracy was finally restored and the part played by the middle class in this process is one of the most elucidating chapters of the book.

In the South the middle classes were won from the Radical Republican coalition by anti-Negro, anti-capitalist slogans. In the West the agrarians, and even the workers, were tampering with money reforms. In the political flux the bourgeoisie salvaged its own skin at the expense of the Negroes, democracy, labor, and the farmers.

But, warns Allen:

"The issues of that revolutionary epoch of Reconstruction still persist—land, suffrage, civil rights—casting their shadow upon the whole country. They strike fire again, in a new setting and on a higher plane of social development. When the bourgeoisie betrayed democracy in the South it chalkd up on the scoreboard of history a whole series of obligations which only the new revolutionary and progressive forces of our epoch can fulfil." (P. 215.)

Two major shortcomings are noticeable in the book. The first is the failure to contrast the material brought to light in the contents and conclusions with those of rene-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gade and reformist distorters. One feels this want particularly for smashing the Lovestoneite and Trotskyite influences in petty-bourgeois intellectual circles, since it is from this source that the developing People's Front, also among Negroes, receives the most unprincipled opposition. Arming workers and progressives with arguments against disruptionists, by polemically exposing their distortions, would have increased Allen's contribution. It would also have added to the spirit and fighting value of the book.

The other shortcoming is its lack of connection with present-day events and the con temporary phase of the struggle for Negro liberation. The Negro people are moving today as at no other time since the Civil War. The Negro proletariat has advanced to hegemony in that movement. The tasks of the Negro people's movement, as organized around the National Negro Congress, are directly connected with the unfinished business remaining on the historical agenda. A definitely pointed chapter should imperatively have been introduced in this connection to clarify for labor and the Negro people's movement the present-day tasks, following the presentation of their historical depth and meaning.

On the whole, the book is a welcome contribution to labor, progressives, and the Negro people, who can derive from it a fuller understanding of American revolutionary traditions, which will help the present generation, with Marxist-Leninist guidance, to liquidate completely the Southern reaction based on the re-enslavement of the Negro people.

This review would not be complete without mention of the admirable introduction by Richard Enmale. It summarizes the past efforts to evaluate the Reconstruction period by various bourgeois, liberal, and reactionary writers. The book gains in depth from Enmale's contribution.

Allen's style in this work represents a distinct improvement in the direction of popular appeal. The book is indeed pleasurable as well as informative reading.

The Reference Notes, Appendices, Bibliography, and Index add to the book's usefulness as a reference source.

JAMES W. FORD and
A. W. BERRY

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Read More About

MARXISM-LENINISM

in Hundreds of Books, Pamphlets, Magazines for Sale at These Bookstores and Literature Distribution Centers

Aberdeen, Wash.: 115½ West Heron St.
Akron: 39 E. Market, Room 303
Baltimore: 501a N. Eutaw St.
Berkeley: 2475 Bancroft Way
Birmingham: 1907 N. 5th Ave.
Boston: 8 Beach Street
Buffalo: 9 Allen St.
Butte: 119 Hamilton St.
Cambridge: 19 Dunster St.
Camden: 304 Federal Street
Chicago: 200 West Van Buren
1326 East 57th St.
Cincinnati: 540 Main St.
Cleveland: 1522 Prospect Ave.
Denver: 522 Mining Exchange Bldg
Des Moines: 218 Youngerman Bldg.
Detroit: 2610 Clifford St.
Duluth: 28 East First St.
Grand Rapids: 319 Bridge St.
Greensboro, N. C.:
315½ S. Elm St., Rm. 6
Hollywood: 652 N. Western Ave.
Indianapolis: Meridan Life Bldg., Room 401
Los Angeles: 226½ S. Spring St.
2411½ Brooklyn Avenue
Madison, Wis.: 521 State St.
Milwaukee: 700 West State St.
Minneapolis: 631 Third Ave., So.
Newark: 216 Halsey St.
New Haven: 38 High Street
New Orleans: 130 Chartres St.
New York: 50 East 13th St.
920 Prospect Ave., Bronx
365 Sutter Ave., Brooklyn
115 West 135th St.
6th St. Boardwalk, Brighton
1309—44th St., Brooklyn
Oakland: 491 10th Street
Oklahoma City:
129½ W. Grand Ave.
Omaha: 301 Karbach Block
Paterson: 201 Market St.
Philadelphia: 104 So. 9th St.
Pittsburgh: 607 Bigelow Blvd.
Portland, Ore.:
323 S. W. Salmon St.
Providence: 335 Westminster St., Room 42
Racine: 205 State Street
Reading: 224 North Ninth Street
Richmond, Va.: 205 N. 2nd St.
Sacramento: 1024 Sixth St.
St. Louis: 3520 Franklin Ave.
St. Paul. 26 E. 4th St.
Salt Lake City: 134 Regent St.
San Diego: 635 E St.
San Francisco:
170 Golden Gate Ave.
1609 O'Farrell St.
121 Haight St.
15 Embarcadero
San Pedro: 244 W. Sixth St.
Santa Barbara:
208 W. Canon Perdido
Seattle: 713½ Pine St.
Spokane: 114 No. Bernard
Superior: 601 Tower Ave.
Tacoma: 1315 Tacoma Ave.
Toledo: 214 Michigan
Washington, D.C.: 1125 14th St., N. W.
Youngstown:
310 W. Federal St., 3d Fl.

●

Write for a complete catalog to any of the above addresses or to

WORKERS LIBRARY PUBLISHERS

P. O. Box 148, Sta. D New York, N. Y.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Marxist Book-of-the-Month Selection

FOR FEBRUARY

THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

By EARL BROWDER

350 pages. Price $2.25

SPECIAL PRICE TO PARTY MEMBERS IN THEIR UNITS
— $1.79 —

In this tremendously important book, the General Secretary of the Communist Party outlines the position of the Party on the most burning issues of the day, the C.I.O., the Supreme Court, the Farmer-Labor Party movement, the welfare of the new generation, the struggle for Negro rights, foreign policy, intervention in Spain, Japan's invasion of China, the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R., the recent trials of the Trotskyites and other traitors, the struggle for collective security, etc. The book reveals, in brilliant and forceful style, the programmatic advance of the People's Front in the United States, our Party's role in giving it political form and direction, and the development of Party policy during the last critical period.

THE PEOPLE'S FRONT is a book for study and discussion in every unit and branch. It is "required reading" for every Party member.

This book will not be released for general sale to the public, and will not appear for sale in the Workers Bookshops until February 21. Only Party members can purchase copies NOW in their units or branches at the special price of **$1.79.**

GET YOUR COPY AT YOUR NEXT UNIT MEETING

•

WORKERS LIBRARY PUBLISHERS

P. O. Box 148, Sta. D New York City

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED